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# RETROSPECTIONS

OF

## THE STAGE.

BY

THE LATE JOHN BERNARD,  
MANAGER OF THE AMERICAN THEATRES,  
AND FORMERLY  
SECRETARY TO THE BEEF-STEAK CLUB.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,  
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1830.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,  
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

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1784.—Bristol.—Tom Blanchard, the “Child of Nature:” his complacency.—An example.—Mr. Palmer’s Coaches: an overturn, and Blisset’s comment.—Weeks, the Innkeeper; David Ross, and George Barnwell.—Quin’s Criticism.—Anecdotes of George Powell.—Holland and Powell the Dramatic “Orestes and Pylades.”—Foote’s joke.—Billy Bates, and his Benefit.—Shuter and the “Bristol Hogs.”—Bath.—The Green-room.—Meyler the Epigrammatist.—Doctor Harrington.—Anecdote of Madame Mara.—Mr. Peach.—Sir John Danvers: his eccentricities, his stockings, coach, wine, library, &c.—Earl Conyngham: his recollection of Garrick and Quin, and comparison.—Model of my Lord Ogleby.—Sir John Oldmixon, the “Bath Beau,” and his curls.—Captain Stanley. the “Bath Bacchus,” and his nose.

IN the summer of 1784, the Bath company was playing at Bristol: and thither I proceed-

ed, embarking for Milford Haven in a lime smack, which was driven by a tempest into Fishcard, a fishing village on the Welsh coast, where there was only one person that could speak English, though (to use an old joke) the natives pretty generally understood Spanish.

From Mr. Palmer I received a most cordial welcome, and shook hands in his corps with mostly old acquaintance; the new faces were those of Jackson, Wordsworth, and Tom Blanchard, the "Child of Nature," who, with Edwin and Weston, forms in my recollection a triumvirate of actors that produced greater effects from impulse, than others from the most skillful preconcertment.

It is needless to say any thing of his public merits: he came to London, where they were duly appreciated; but Blanchard, like Edwin and Weston, was the comedian of private life — the originality of his ideas could only be equalled by his mode of delivering them. What amused me most, was his imperturbable complacency; there seemed to be no circumstance under heaven, serious or ludicrous, that was ca-

pable of disturbing it; whether on the stage, or in the street, in encountering a creditor, or (from some gross lapsus) the risible thunder of an audience, never would a muscle of his countenance relax, or any intelligence dwell about it, to affirm that he was conscious of his situation. Out of the abundance of proofs I received upon this point, perhaps my reader will permit me to lay one before him.

Bristol was the first engagement that brought him into notice. Previously, he had served his stage apprenticeship by strolling; and it was in one of the neighbouring villages Mr. Palmer first observed him. Tom was well known in Bristol; and a few of his friends were in the habit of paying him a weekly visit, to felicitate him with the novelty of a supper, and by patronising his benefit, prevent it from becoming his temporary ruin.

On one occasion, these worthies had been discomfiting the blue devils by the aid of a potent force of white spirits, and entered the boxes in a very hilarious and discriminative condition. The play was "Macbeth," and Blanchard,



by doubling Banquo, a Witch, and Macduff, was laying claim to the theatric eulogy of being a "host in himself." Versatility was Garrick's distinction; and presuming Tom played tragedy badly, in this play he could not be the "first murderer." His friends made their appearance at the moment Macduff receives the news of his wife and children's destruction; every humane person here, or at least every parent, has a sympathetic thrill, and flies to snuff or pocket handkerchief to disembody his feelings. Tom had no doubt worked himself up to throw half-a-dozen matrons and milk-maids into hysterics; but his companions, expecting to find him reveling in some broad comedy character, were incapable of excitement: they listened to his first burst of agony, (which might have been moderately well given,) in a kind of stupid surprise, but further attention was impossible. Simultaneously, they rose up in their seats, characterised the whole thing as a ——— humbug; and one of them having brought a bottle of whisky in his pocket, publicly produced it — cursed Tom's wife and children, and bade him

leave off "howling there like a house-dog," and come and drink with them. Such a request, at such a moment, any one will allow, was, to say the least of it, indecorous; but, however Melpomene might frown, the actor feel, or the prompter stare, Blanchard instantly perceived that, coming from such an influential quarter, the request was not to be denied. His presence of mind, on this trying occasion, would have done honour to a life's instruction in the schools. He politely bowed to his inviter, begged the messenger and gentlemen about him to suspend their conversation for an instant, approached the box, took the bottle, drank, smacked his lips, bowed again, returned to his place, resumed his attitude, recollected his murdered wife and children, and proceeded as if nothing had happened. His friends were now no longer his foes, and Macduff triumphed alike over usurper and spectator.

I believe I have noticed every one besides in this company, worth noticing, on a former occasion. Among the additions, Jackson was a decent actor, and Wordsworth a pretty singer,

but with little compass, which the ladies used to forgive however, remarking—that “he looked all he could not express.”

Mr. Palmer, whose coach-inventing faculty was already notorious, had contrived two conveyances to transport the company from Bath to Bristol; the one containing fifteen, the other, twelve persons. He was now playing three times a-week in Bristol, and once in Bath, till the season of the latter came on, when this order was reversed. This arrangement was very pleasant whilst the fine weather lasted, and created a family-feeling in the company, who, living in both places, would invite each other to beds and breakfasts. But, when the season advanced, returning nine miles at one o'clock in the morning, after a long night's performance, was any thing but desirable.

People, however, in this world will never regard evil in a comparative, but a positive light; and we on one of these latter occasions, beginning to murmur, were instructed, by an unexpected aggravation of our miseries.

The rain came down in torrents; the road

was a sea of slush ; and the night was so diabolically dark, that a man with a heavy conscience might have imagined we were on the highway to the capital of the infernal regions. Our coachman was not to be execrated, therefore, if, in nearing the hedge, one of the wheels mounted a prostrate mile-stone, and turned the long vehicle over into a sufficiently capacious ditch. A minute previously there had been as much discontent amongst us, as in the pit of a theatre at a bad play : I don't know what the latter effect could be compared to but the sudden alarm of fire ; such screeching and kicking, tugging and tumbling, imprecating and deprecating, I have no power to describe. My reader will be satisfied when I say, that no one was seriously hurt, but that every one was tremendously drenched. A night-coach luckily coming up, afforded us assistance to right the vehicle, and collect our scattered bundles of properties, which had embellished the road with wigs, roses, ruffles, swords, hats, and gloves. This journey, which was begun in uproarious dissatisfaction, concluded in the most silent

resignation ; we entered, and proceeded without another syllable ; and the fear of another accident hung over us ever after, like the hair-suspended sword mentioned in the classics. Blisset made me laugh, however, in despite of all annoyances ; he was notedly of the crab-apple kind, and but reflected in Jaques and Rueful his natural temperament. The ditch had been his physician with the others ; and as he shook the muddy moisture from his garments, he fixed his eye on me, and exclaimed, “ Johnny, now I can understand Shylock :—‘ There be land rats, and there be *water* rats.’ ”

The “ Bush,” at Bristol, was at this time kept by Weeks, one of the most generous and convivial of the ancient fraternity of hosts. He had a great attachment to the stage ; indeed, he was a clever actor, and seemed to have the season’s success as much at heart as the manager ; for no man could have laboured more to promote it. It will be supposed, that the sphere of a principal innkeeper’s utility was not a confined one. He as invariably put our bill into the hands of a customer as his own ; and I be-

lieve the charge on our account was always the greatest. An arrival from London was the sure parent of a visit to us, till this nightly reinforcement in our boxes began to be steadfastly looked to; so that whenever we perceived, about nine o'clock, the sudden influx of certain muffed, cloaked, booted, and great-coated strangers, the usual remark in the Green-room used to be, "The London Coach is in!"

In his private little parlour, I frequently met the veteran David Ross, a tragedian of a tolerably high as well as long standing at Covent Garden. Ross was distinguished by being the original George Barnwell, but more particularly by the circumstance of having checked and converted a real Barnwell, who one night entered the theatre to lounge away an hour, before the commission of his relative's murder: there contemplating his counterpart, conscience freed itself from the grasp of desperation, and drove him home a penitent.

This anecdote Ross never failed to communicate to every new acquaintance, and, in my opinion, with great propriety: an old man's

vanity was to be pardoned, where an event redounded so greatly, not only to his own honour, but his profession's. For this exact illustration of Shakspeare's words, "Guilty creatures sitting at a play," &c. must be considered an incontrovertible proof, that the Stage has been, and ever may be, a medium of moral improvement.

Ross, in his later days, grew very portly, and his face became so overloaded with fat, as to defeat its expression, which necessarily lay in the perception of the muscles. On the last occasion on which he assumed his favourite character, Quin was behind the scenes, and encountered him. The satirist surveyed him all over for a minute, and then exclaimed, "George Barnwell, David! George Barnwell, an Apprentice! D—n me if you don't look more like the Lord Mayor of London!"

At Bristol I found a few of my old acquaintance, who formed the members of the "Sporting Club" ten years before, when, in the neighbouring hamlet of Chew Magna, I made my professional *début*. Some of them were now

members of a party who met yearly at the "Bush," to commemorate George Powell. Such was the public and private esteem which, in this place, this ill-fated genius commanded ; one of the most striking examples of the class termed "no one's enemies but their own," and in dramatic records distinguished as the only man who, in Garrick's days, played Lear, and made the Roscius tremble for his laurels.

It is well known that, on some occasion when business or pleasure carried the latter to the Continent, Powell was put forward in his characters, either as a forlorn hope in the absence of others, or as a means of effectually "cutting his throat ;" a piece of managerial duplicity which Garrick was not the only one who stooped to. To the wonder of the Green-room, not less than the delight of the town, Powell made a stand, and Lacey instantly dispatched a bulletin to his partner conveying the information, and concluding with these words, "If you don't come back directly, David, the public will have forgot you when you do." It will be supposed that Garrick did not treat this hint with contempt.



narrowly escaped with life. The next morning, when the circumstance was mentioned in the Green-room, Foote exclaimed, "Well then, Powell was burned?"—"Oh no!"—"Why, don't you say Holland was very near?"

The Bristol Theatre was originally opened by Powell and Holland; the town having been previously visited by a strolling company under the domination of Billy Bates, a subsequent understrapper at Drury Lane. Bates had found Bristol his most profitable resort; but, unable to check the tide of public feeling when it set in favour of a stationary theatre and respectable performances, was glad to turn it, as far as possible, to his advantage, by making Holland engage himself and family. Bates, as most acting-managers are, was the commander of his company, on the stage, and in the closet. He played all the best parts, and thus laid claim to the character of the "superior actor." On the present occasion, however, his talents were somewhat undervalued. A tragedy was the opening performance, in which Holland did a King at the head

of his army, and Bates was condemned to a pitiful messenger who gave him notice of the enemy's approach. This character comprehended but one entrance and five lines of diction; but these five lines were precious; and Bates, having a throat like a speaking trumpet, rushed on at rehearsal, and thundered them forth, taking at the same time a stage-effective, but rather indecorous sweep of the boards from the fourth wing to the floats.

"Mr. Bates!" said Holland with a stare of surprise, "you surely don't intend to deliver that message in that manner at night?"—"Yes, but I do, Mr. Holland."—"You are too loud, Sir!"—"Loud, Sir! not at all, Sir; I'm only energetic. I've got a benefit to make as well as you, Mr. Holland!"

The citizens of Bristol, from their seemingly blunt and business-like manner, were impudently nicknamed by travellers the "Bristol Hogs;" and as the old adage avers, "an ill name never wants wings," the appellation was familiar through most parts of the kingdom. In thea-

To Meyler I was indebted for numerous introductions to the dramatic diletanti, at this fountain-head of taste and criticism; but perhaps I was in no instance so truly obliged to him as in forming the acquaintance of Doctor Harrington.

If I am bound to consider Bath, at this period, as the beginning of the summer of my public and private enjoyments, I am proud to confess it was to the Doctor's society I owed many of its fruits. With his talents as a physician or musician I have nothing to do; the world long ago formed its estimate of both; perhaps any remarks upon his personal character would be equally needless, since it has been so often and sufficiently dwelt upon, which is to say, eulogized: but I must regret that, of the many hours I passed at his table and enjoyed his highly communicative spirit, these journals, which have been so faithful in preserving many trifling particulars, should present so little evidence. One circumstance however is recorded, which must apologize for the absence of others.

Previous to his residence in Bath, the Doctor

lived at Wells; and one day after dinner, whilst entertaining a circle of musical friends, a German family came under his window, of whom the father played the flute, the mother a guitar, a girl sung, and a boy carried round the hat. The tones of the girl's voice, and her brilliant execution of a piece of music they were well acquainted with, startled and delighted them. The Doctor sent out to desire they would come into the hall and repeat it: his family were now made partakers of his surprise and gratification. The Doctor, whose heart was as open to the cry of necessity, as his ear to the finest harmonies of Haydn, then inquired into the circumstances of the family, and was informed that the father, a Mr. Schemling, being disappointed of employment in London, whither he had proceeded from the Continent, had been compelled to this itinerant resource, as the only means of support. The Doctor could do little for him at Wells, which was not a musical place, but gave him letters to some influential persons in Bath, as a means of procuring patronage to undertake a morning concert. There, the girl's abilities did not fail to

divest the Doctor's recommendation of its appearance of enthusiasm. She was heard, wondered at, and talked of; some amateurs instantly tendered their services to carry the father's project into effect; bills were printed, tickets issued and purchased; and the Doctor rode over to superintend in person the musical arrangements. The proceeds of this concert were sufficient to enable the family to return to London and thence to Germany, where their daughter, being placed under proper masters, began to develop her powers, grew up, married, and in a few years after revisited England, and, with a comet lustre, blazed upon its public as Madame Mara.

At the Doctor's residence I was brought in contact with a brilliant assemblage of noble and noted characters: Rauzzini was one to whom I became indebted for many professional services, Loder another, and Earl Conyngham, Sir Charles Bampfylde, Lord Cork, and Captain Baker, were of the number, who, on stretching out their hands to me, never afterwards withdrew them.

There were a few persons, however, who made

my acquaintance of their own accord: one was Mr. Peach of Bownham House, Gloucestershire, a truly estimable and generous gentleman, whose wealth was thought sufficient to warrant the jest, that “one Peach was worth three plums;”—another was Sir John Oldmixon, the Bath beau;—a third, that celebrated eccentric, Sir John Danvers.

The Eccentric stands out in relief to all his kind, like a chaos of the mental elements, rather than any peculiar arrangement of them; and I could never yet satisfy myself why these curiosities should come into the world, but on the supposition that Nature created them in one of her desperate moments, to dissipate the *ennui* of forming so many thousands alike.

Sir John was as well known in Bath as the Mayor or the Pump-room; his dress, his manners, and his apothegms, were equally notorious; and no man perhaps in England enjoyed so extensive an acquaintance; the meanest and the noblest were comprehended in his sphere,—he touched the zenith and the nadir of social intercourse. I am not aware whether his life has

been published ; but if so, there must be many of the present day who never read it, and it will answer my purpose to pen from memory a few of his peculiarities.

He was of a tall and gaunt structure, with a slight stoop, and an immense Roman nose, which did not slightly resemble the beak of a condor. He wore his wig on one side, with the tail flapping over his ear, surmounted by a hat hardly large enough to cover three of the curls. His coat was of a cut and colour which must have been fashionable about the time of the Revolution ; his breeches conformed to his coat,—they were of black velvet, spotted over, like the back of a panther, with port wine. His waistcoat was the only elegant habiliment he wore, and the embroidery of this had long since faded under the momentary showers of snuff it was exposed to. But the most whimsical feature of his dress was his stockings : he wore a white one on one leg, and a black one on the other, intending thereby, as he declared, to express his political opinions. The white he termed the

Tory, and the black, the Whig; and his right being the most venerable leg, the appearance of either on his dexter shank signified his confidence in the conduct of Mr. Pitt, or Mr. Fox. This mode of telegraphing his tenets was universally admired.

To theatricals he was passionately attached; and two evenings out of the three were invariably passed in the stage-box. His appearance there, however, would sometimes divide the public attention with the stage. At a tragedy, his sensibility was so great, he would blubber like a child; and in a comedy, he could never contain his satisfaction, but would open his capacious jaws, (and when open, his mouth certainly bore the same proportion to his head, that the sea does to the land, in a map of the world,) and laugh out, and aloud, as if his heart was determined to be heard. Then, if any thing occurred in the gallery to disturb the progress of a scene, up he would stretch his tall figure from the box, and shake his stick at the elevated critics; the effect of which may be presumed, as



well as of the conversations he would occasionally hold with the people in the orchestra about their wives and children.

The first notice he took of me was in Charles Surface: when in the screen-scene I retreated to the stage-door, and turned to retort upon Sir Peter his eulogium on Joseph, his delight was so great, that clapping and crying out would not do, but he must needs poke me in the ribs with his long stick and exclaim, "That's right, you comical dog! don't go away." In an instant, the audience released Sir Peter from his misery, and began to laugh at me. I must confess, when I went off, if I was not irritated, I was considerably astonished, till the prompter explained his character. The next morning (so favourable the impression I had made) he called at the theatre to see me, and learning I was on the stage rehearsing, sent a card to me, with these words—"When you have done prayers, I shall be glad to see you in the lobby. —John Danvers, to Charles Surface."

The wording of this invitation was a pretty strong evidence of its author's character. I re-

paired to him when my duties were concluded, and he very cordially commenced my acquaintance, by some flattering allusions to the past night's performance, and a pressing request to dine. It being a non-play day, I was under no necessity to refuse; and, in the interim, he proposed taking a turn in the street. Chaining me to his side by a tight grasp of the arm, away he then darted, in a sort of half-trot, his other hand clenching and swinging by the middle his long staff of a stick. In the broad light I gained a distinct view of his odd appearance; and, accustomed as I had been to stand the fire of the public gaze, I must confess, that on that occasion I felt rather qualmish. I was then but seven-and-twenty however, and wore a scarlet coat.

When our promenade was over (during which Sir John rambled very amusingly over a variety of subjects), his coach came up, and we got in. The vehicle was of a piece with himself: it was of a dark colour, slung on very high straps, and large enough in a winter's day for a man to have caught cold in. The pos-

tilion and coachman were a pair of sexagenarians, in a blackish livery; and the four long-bodied horses were black also, with flowing manes, and graceful switch tails, and feet that had been educated to pace over the stones at the rate of about four miles an hour; indeed, they seemed to have a due idea of their dignity; and the whole affair might have been mistaken for an undertaker's.

The same spirit of peculiarity pervaded things at home, where Sir John had a bill hanging up, denoting his precise species of aliment for the day. Monday, for instance, lamb and cider; Tuesday, beef and beer, &c. I found, however, that the cook turned up his nose at this code of regulations, when company came. Our dinner was modern, plenteous, and excellent. Sir John also retained a travelling chaplain, who said grace, read prayers, and took care of his library. This was another curiosity; abounding with all the best works of the best authors, there was not one volume perfect. So eager had been Sir John in his pursuit of knowledge, that he had inspected each; and when-

ever a passage pleased him, he tore out the leaf, thrust it into his pocket, and then applied it to other purposes. He had a taste also for painting, and had lumbered a room with old second-hand portraits, which he touched up into imaginary likenesses to Chatham, Chesterfield, the King, &c.

Sir John lived well, as the gout in his left leg testified. He usually took his three bottles, which he called his three friends : the first, his encourager ; the second, his adviser ; and the third, his consoler. He had also a humorous knack of bestowing upon wine a regal appellation, and making its various species represent, when placed upon the table, the sovereigns of the countries that produced them :—thus, a bottle of port stood for the King of Portugal, champagne for that of France, Madeira for his Spanish Majesty, whilst a bottle of porter, I believe, represented our beloved Monarch. If we turned, therefore, from one wine to another, he would exclaim, “ Now we have bled the King of Spain to death, what if we decapitate the King of France ! ”

Sir John, however, claimed a noble distinction from his kindred in general — he was neither penurious nor illiberal ; his purse and table were ever open to the needy and neglected, and the only reason he had not more dining acquaintance was, because people magnified his humours to a pitch beyond endurance. To tradespeople he was particularly generous ; for, wherever he noticed a new shop, he would go in, purchase their commodities, however useless, or exorbitantly priced ; and when they were sent home, refuse to take them in.

Earl Conyngham was one of my most distinguished patrons. He represented, in its most extensive sense, the true old English nobleman. He was a convivialist, in that most convivial of English times, a wit, and a man of as much refinement as observation ; one whose experience had ripened all the buds of education into sentiments which did as much honour to his heart as his head.

His Lordship was extremely gouty, and somewhat asthmatic, so as to occasion his continual

sitting in a chair, which, by the turning of a screw or crank, rose and fell in accommodation to his position.

When no rehearsals interfered, his Lordship honoured me by invitations to breakfast, over which I would chat to him the nature of the past night's performance, and the newspapers' novelties. Theatricals were a favourite theme with him, and the glories of the stage engrossed the greenest field of his remembrance. Quin was his great actor, and he loved to pitch him continually against Garrick in tragedy and comedy. Garrick could neither play Falstaff, nor Sir John Brute, Cato, nor Othello; two of which being Shakspeare's *chef-d'œuvres*, he considered Quin (who was excellent in all) to have the greatest genius. He remembered in his early days seeing Garrick and Quin play Cassius and Brutus, and he described the effect of the "quarrel scene" by this powerful image. Quin resembled a solid three-decker, lying quiet, and scorning to fire; but with the evident power, if put forth, of sending its antagonist to the bottom;—

Garrick, a frigate running round it, attempting to grapple, and every moment threatening an explosion that would destroy both.

His Lordship contributed to my public as well as private advantages. He afforded me a model for Lord Ogleby; a character which, with any advantage to my fame, I played for the first time in Bath. In a moral respect, certainly little or no resemblance existed between this nobleman and Garrick's splendid conception. His Lordship was fonder of the society of men than of women, and had no vanity but on the score of his critical acumen. The nature of Lord Ogleby, I readily perceived on the first reading; but his *manner* was for a long time a desideratum. Garrick intended him to represent not only a debilitated, but an elegant nobleman; of such a person I had no picture in my eye, till I saw his Lordship; and ever after, the suspicion never entered my head that my original was to be improved.

It was during one of my morning calls that I met Sir John Oldmixon, at his Lordship's; and the flattering introduction I then received, im-

proved our previously distant street acquaintance into a lasting intimacy. This gentleman, from the refinement of his dress and manners, bore the peculiar appellation of the "Bath Beau," and upon all points of good-breeding was looked up to as an oracle. This distinction, in the metropolis of fashion, he was not slightly proud of; it acknowledged him as the legitimate successor in the dynasty of Nash. Certainly, the mechanism of his dress was a profound study, and his science in manœuvring a snuff-box and a cane, was for many months, in my eyes, an impenetrable mystery. I have been told that Sir John was the original of Mrs. Cowley's Lord Sparkle; he certainly was of mine, accident having thrown me into his company on my first visit to Bath. Whatever success I obtained in the fops and fine gentlemen, (which were the characters I played mostly in London,) I am willing to acknowledge that I owe it all to the strong impressions I received from Sir John Oldmixon. But this gentleman enjoyed the additional celebrity of having founded an order of his own,—the "full curl" order, as it might



have been called, grateful to the memories of the peruquiers of the past generation. Our first performance of "Which is the Man?" was so successful, that in the course of the ensuing week it was repeated. The next day, Sir John met and stopped me in the street, saying, "Bernard, I saw your 'Sparkle,' last night; they say you imitate me!"—"It is my object, Sir John," I replied, "to imitate the manners of an English nobleman!"—"Ah, ah, true; but your dress was incorrect."—"In that respect," said I, "I must confess, Sir John, I did design to imitate you."—"Oh no, quite wrong; you had only twelve curls of a side; I never wear under sixteen!"

Captain Stanley (the Pylades of Major Halloway, the well-known amateur,) was a great *bon-vivant*; and from the rotundity of his figure, and the roseate blush of his nose, bore the convivial distinction of "The Bath Bacchus." He was by no means a brilliant man in the street, though one of the most agreeable to be met with, even in those times, at table. The cause was apparent, and he used to acknowledge it.

his ideas were stranded in the day-time, and required a bottle or two to float them to a conversational level.

He was a frequent visitor to our boxes ; but, however great his gratification or sympathy, he could not at all times command his senses, and would fall asleep ; the result of which was, that he would favour the audience with an original melody (in a pretty high key) by his nose. One evening, in the “Twelfth Night,” Orsini had repeated the lines.—“Sing again,—oh, it comes o’er my ear like the sweet South, stealing and giving odours ;” when the Captain, suddenly waking, replied with a shrill blast on his nasal instrument, which disconcerted the actor, and plunged the house in a convulsion of merriment.

## CHAPTER II.

1784-5.—Anecdotes of the Institution of the “Bath Catch Club.”—Sir John Danvers, the proposer.—Earl Conyngham, Lord Cork, &c., Committee; Meyler, Poet Laureate; Rauzzini, Musical Conductor; Dr. Harrington, Composer and Physician.—*Jeu d’esprit*.—Its Rules and “Order.”—“Ladies’ Night.”—Duchess of Devonshire.—Incedon’s début at Bath.—Rauzzini’s contempt for English singing, and conversion.—His criticism on Incedon, &c.—Incedon’s mode of “recollecting the words.”—Swansea.—Blisset’s reading in “Rueful.”—Sir J. Danvers’ generosity and attachment, the subject of sarcasm.

1785-6.—Bath.—Mrs. Esten—Anecdotes of Dr. Herschel, Musician and Astronomer, when in the Bath Orchestra.—Sarcasms of his companions, and of mine.—The absentee Planet.—A surprise.—Mrs. Baddeley’s beauty.—Edwin’s Comment.—The Doctor’s Generosity.—Charles Dibdin and Mr. Harris.—Début of Miss Brunton.—The friendship of an Eccentric.—Brighton.—Royal Patronage and Compliment.

THE first novelty of the season was Mrs. Inchbald’s comedy of “Such Things Are,” in which I played Twineall; and, for the first time,

attracted the attention of the London managers. Diamond was the Philanthropist; Blisset, Sir Luke Tremor; Murray or Brunton, the Sultan; Mrs. Bernard, the Female Prisoner; and Mrs. Sheriff, Lady Tremor.

The first epoch in my private history was the setting on foot of the “Bath Catch Club;” the circumstances of which were as follow :—

There was at this time in Bath but one musical meeting; an old “Pipe and Pot Club,” which had been established by the tradesmen, some thirty years before; and, though distinguished by a good deal of harmony moral and musical, but little frequented by any but actors who wanted to make benefits. The reason of this was, not that the members were tradesmen, (for convivialists in those days were not so scrupulous for the titles as the talents of their companions,) but because the worthy cits had established this meeting as a private point of union, where they could assemble on a Saturday night, when the cares and accounts of the week were over, to “smoke a pipe and sing a song:” thus, it was no object with them to obtain

visitors, although they were not averse to receive them; but the spirit of their original design having perpetuated the laws, a man was obliged, on "going to Rome" in this manner, to do as Rome did. One of their most unpleasant regulations was, that nothing should be drunk in that society but malt liquor; another, perfectly barbarous, that every one present should contribute to the harmony of the evening; or, in other words, sing, which was very frequently contributing to its discord.

Thus they deprived themselves of the presence of many clever fellows who were desirable talkers, but had no "voices in that city;" whilst others who could vocalize, kicked at the peculiarity in their mode of sacrificing to Bacchus. Convivialists of that period were independent fellows; they were practically men of spirit, and very few of them could "wind themselves up" upon any thing but brandy. Such a state of things in the most musical and sociable, as well as the most fashionable, of all the cities of the realm, was not to be borne; and

the obvious relief was to set up another club upon a liberal scale, to which the rank and talent of this gay depôt might resort, unoppressed by the tyranny of beer or bad arrangements.

The first person who proposed this, was Sir John Danvers; than whom did not exist a more stedfast devotee to the cause of merriment and music. His summer months, he used to say, were all passed at the table, and the frosty and rainy weather came on when he had to attend to his person or estate. Sir John had visited the "Old Club" once or twice, and, the last time, in my company; and though we both petitioned hard to be relieved from malt liquor, we found that the members did not more resemble the Persians in their addiction to pipes, than the immutability of their laws.

Coming away, which was at an early hour, our impressions were pretty much the same; a hint from Sir John was sufficient to reveal the fact; upon that, I spake: and he replied. A simple suggestion begot a deliberate discussion; and by the time we reached home, though

we travelled in chairs, and had to talk out of the windows, we had also arrived at some definite conclusions.

Briefly I proposed, under the sanction of Sir John's name, to draw up the prospectus of a Club which should contain from fifty to a hundred members,—meet weekly,—be directed by a committee with the regular officers, and embrace all the musical talent, amateur and professional, in the city and neighbourhood. A moderate sum would provide for its out-fits, and a "Guinea Subscription," with the fines of rules properly established, would be sufficient to meet every subsequent expense.

With my head and heart full of the design, I went home at about two o'clock in the morning, and permitted my ferment to boil over on about two sheets of paper: next morning, at breakfast, I condensed the elaborate draught, and carried it to Sir John; he attached to it his signature, and headed the subscription paper with the pleasing sum of ten pounds. I then commenced my operations by proceeding to Dr. Harrington, whose delight at the pro-

posal was not inferior to our own. He accompanied me to Rauzzini and Loder, as the most eminent professionals in Bath, if not in England; and ensuring their co-operation, we gave the project a fair launch into publicity. I then made a circuit of my noble patrons and friends, and not only obtained their signatures, but subscriptions, which varied from two to ten pounds. The first twelve, Sir John proposed, should form the committee, who would elect their chairman, secretary, and treasurer, and proceed to the concoction of the rules. These twelve were the following:—Sir John Danvers, Earl Conyningham, Lord Cork, Sir Charles Bampfylde, Sir Charles Asgill, Captain Baker, Captain Tinker, Doctor Harrington, Rauzzini, Loder, Meyler, and Bernard; the latter of whom was elected permanent secretary and treasurer, *pro tem*.

Meyler then placed a fair copy of the prospectus and subscription on his table; and Sir John accompanied me to the “White Lion,” kept by Arnold, to secure his large room, the best in Bath, as the scene of our festivities.



the world a generation too late, I will merely notice a few of the rules and principles of an institution which contributed so largely to the diffusion of that “spirit” and pass on.

Our fines were—for an oath, a shilling; politics, two; religion, three; and a quarrel, or dispute, a dozen of claret. Every member was permitted to bring a friend, but, in so doing, was obliged to send up to me the stranger’s card, with a mark upon its back, to say whether he could sing, and, if so, whether in glees or solos: a certain number of pieces of music were arranged to be sung nightly, the list of which lay before me: five or ten minutes’ interval was allowed between each for conversation, during which I successively sent the cards round to their owners, bearing on their backs a request that they would favour the company at the conclusion of the next piece of music—the announcement of the name being a sufficient signal: their replies enabled me to fuel the flame without exciting the slightest notice; and thus the time, which at these meetings is usually lost from the colds or caprices, the inability or

disinclination of persons to sing, was effectually saved, and devoted to the general enjoyment. This “ Order” was unequalled at any other meeting, save the “ Beefsteak ;” and, I may be permitted to add, contributed in no small degree to the elevation of the Catch Club so far above its contemporaries. A month after the commencement, our numbers were full. Of a hundred members, the average attendance was fifty, who, with their friends, amounted, nightly, to about seventy persons. Order, in such assembly, was synonymous with enjoyment, (since it prevented its suspension,) and its noiseless maintenance with the regular progression of the performances, certainly surprised the stranger as much as the rare merits of what he heard.

Every meeting went off with so much *éclat*, that before the conclusion of the season, the Bath “ Catch Club” was all the rage, and we had not only the men but the women petitioning for admission as visitors. This induced the Committee to give what was termed “ A Ladies’ Night,” for which we obtained from the Mayor the use of the “ Town Hall,” and

performed a concert with our entire strength. On this occasion, I felt myself placed in a novel situation :—there were fifty-seven titled females on the list ; and it was my duty, as the “ Master of the Ceremonies,” to lead them to their seats, in the due order of their precedence. Never having studied the Peerage, and always having treated this point on the stage with some indifference, I am afraid I should have committed some serious blunders, had not Sir Charles Bampfylde kindly furnished me with hints to thread the mazes of etiquette securely. I came off, however, with flying colours ; for, at the end of the performance, on approaching the Duchess of Devonshire, (who crowned the assembly with her beauty and her breeding,) and inquiring how she had been pleased, her musical lips severed, and she answered, “ I’ve been greatly pleased, Mr. Bernard, and not in the least degree, with your attention.”

As I was sitting one morning at breakfast, about a fortnight after our club commenced, a rap came to the door, and two gentlemen were shown up to me, in one of whom I recognised

Charles Incledon, the other was a Mr. Durell, and both were members of the Southampton company, now playing at Winchester; from which place they had walked to Bath.

When Incledon returned from sea, I was playing at Exeter, (the winter previous to my visit to Ireland,) and as we had been intimate under Dr. Jackson's roof, he did not scruple to call upon me and make known his dramatic propensities. I accordingly introduced him to Mr. Hughes, who, wanting a singer for Plymouth that summer, engaged him. Some trifling difference had sundered them, and he had been wandering ever since, from one town to another, undecided in his views, and displeased with his managers. Hearing, at length, of my popularity at Bath, he had undertaken this visit, in the hopes that I might have as much influence with Mr. Palmer as Mr. Hughes. I was not more flattered than grieved by this expectation, knowing that Mr. Palmer, in common with most managers, made it a rule to make no engagements in the midst of a season. All I could do, therefore, was to accompany him to

that gentleman, tell his story, and let him plead his own case with a song. My recollection of his powers was a very faint one, and I could not conjecture what the result of this simple specimen would be. Mr. Palmer received us very pleasantly, and listened very attentively; but in reply arrayed the very objections to his wishes I had premised. He was prevailed on, however, to enter the theatre, and hear Inledon sing, who selected one of Dibdin's popular ballads. I was enraptured; but Mr. Palmer, either from some defect in his auricular organ, or a strong prejudice in favour of Wordsworth, expressed a very milk-and-water sort of satisfaction, and did nothing but reiterate his objections with the usual regrets, (a managerial property,) that, plum-like, enclose the pill of a refusal. Inledon's answer was that of his companion, and both retired quite chop-fallen—more particularly as they had expended their last shilling in reaching Bath. Having on my account been induced to undertake this adventure, I felt bound to assist them back again, and luckily I then had the means; but I resolved, before

Incledon quitted Bath, to make a few of my friends participators in my gratification. That being a non-play day, I was enabled to invite a party of musicals to dine with me and meet the young sailor; among whom were Dr. Harrington, Meyler, and Loder.

I shall not attempt to describe the sensation his singing created then and there; because I believe there are so many thousands existing who have felt that sensation themselves. Suffice it, that the next morning Charles and his friend mounted the roof of a coach, on their return to Winchester; and Dr. Harrington ran about the Bath streets, stopping every one he knew, to acquaint them with the "musical phenomenon" he had heard. Mr. Palmer was now beset on all sides with inquiries, petitions, and remonstrances; and, rather in compliance with his friends' than his own wishes, in about six weeks afterwards, despatched Incledon the offer of an engagement, which was accepted.

His appearance, at a time when the old English melodies were the prevailing taste, and simplicity and sweetness were the synonymes of

music, from the peasant to the peer, was, no doubt, a most fortunate circumstance; but he was endowed by nature to carry the popular enthusiasm to a pitch which no singer for the next century must hope to rival.

From the stage it was an easy step to our Catch Club, and the value of such an accession was estimated by the members. However, the obligation lay not altogether on the shoulders of the society. Incledon there obtained his first friends and patrons, who introduced him to the distinguished circles of Bath, and procured for him the countenance he met with on going to London.

Rauzzini had a great contempt for English singing; he had never heard any, he said, which did not puzzle him to determine which was worst, the tone or the taste. On the day Incledon dined with me, he was absent, and all Dr. Harrington's encomiums would not convert him; he believed the Doctor to be a man of taste and judgment; but, on this point, feared that he was prejudiced. The night of Incledon's *début*, it was with some difficulty, there-

fore, he could be prevailed on to attend. He accompanied the Doctor's party, but rather by compulsion than persuasion; and, on entering the box, turned his back to the stage, as was his invariable custom on such occasions. Before Incledon had got through three bars of his first song, (as Edwin, in *Robin Hood*,) Rauzzini began to listen; three more turned him round; another six convinced him, and, at the conclusion of the verse, he joined loudly in the applause. When the opera was over, he went behind the scenes, took Incledon by the hand, and said, "Sare, I sank you for ze pleasure you af give me; you vas de fus Ingleesh singer I have hear, vat can sing. Sare, you af got a voice—you af got a voice."

The next day, the topic of conversation was not so much the merits of Incledon, as the criticisms of his admirer; and the general inquiry was not, "Have you heard the new singer?" but, "Have you heard what Mr. Rauzzini says of the new singer?"

Incledon was undoubtedly a singer after Dr. Harrington's own heart; but his triumph over



Rauzzini was truly flattering. The latter did not scruple to declare at the Club, on the ensuing night, that he had never heard such power, flexibility, sweetness, and fulness, with so rich a falsetto, in any voice, of any country whatever. "Shentleman," said he, "it vas vat I call one natural curioss"(—ity.)

Rauzzini was now a nightly, instead of an occasional, visitor at the theatre, where he would establish himself in the right-hand stage-box, planting his right ear towards the orchestra, and, distending his eyes (during Incledon's songs) as though the organs of sight were also receptacles of sound.

Charles, at the conclusion of a favourite ballad, one evening, made a beautiful run, in that way which was altogether his own, rolling his voice grandly up, like a surge of the sea, till, touching the top-note, it gushed away in sweetness. "Coot Cot !" cried Rauzzini, looking up, "it vas vare lucky dere vas some roof dere, or dat feller vould be hear by de ainshel in hev'n." When he sang at Vauxhall, perhaps my reader will say, this obstacle did not exist.

Incledon had always a bad memory for study, and this was one reason why he was not a better actor. "Without a man knows his author," Macklin used to say, "he does not know himself." In addition to this, he could never vamp, to use a theatrical technical, which implies the substitution of your own words and ideas when the author's are forgotten. Vamping requires some tact, if not talent; and Incledon's recent occupations had imparted to his manners that genuine salt-water simplicity to which the artifices of acting were insurmountable difficulties. With his little stage experience, at this period, it will be supposed that he was more open to a lapsus than subsequently; and Mr. Palmer, having noticed one or two, was so careful for his fame, (nothing now could exceed the manager's kindness,) that he came round to Incledon and cautioned him. The latter promised to be more attentive; but resolved, if he again blundered or bog'd, to apologize in a manner of his own.

An occasion was not long in arriving. The next night, whilst playing a lover, in the midst

of a passionate address to his mistress, he stuck as fast as though he had been up to his middle in a Kilcobery slough. In vain the lady hemm'd and ha'd, the prompter whispered, or the audience stared ; his agitation only increased at the assistance that was given him, and in endeavouring to recollect a little, he forgot more. All was now at a stand-still, till Incledon suddenly observed to the lady, that love having taken away his language, perhaps she would permit him to express what he felt in a favourite air. He then broke into one of his ballads, and whilst singing the first verse recollected the author ; a thunder of applause greeted this effusion, and he proceeded with spirit, but on quitting the stage met Mr. Palmer at the wings, who stared at him like a statue. Incledon immediately explained : " Mr. Palmer, you have been exceedingly kind and generous to me, and I wouldn't offend you or the Bath audience for the world ; there's no persons I respect more ; they treat me like a prince and a gentleman at the ' Catch Club ;' but the truth is, Sir, I forgot my part,

and I could not take the cue. I assure you, Sir, my agitation was so great, I could not take the cue, and I introduced one verse of 'Black-eyed Susan,' in order to recollect the words."

Incledon, finding this plea sufficient, availed himself of his resource on several subsequent occasions, so that at length it became a remark in the Green-room, whenever his voice was heard on the stage, "Is he singing the music, or recollecting the words?"

This season concluded not more to the satisfaction of Mr. Palmer than every member of his company. My benefit was patronized by the "Catch Club," (which was rendering my box-leaf the "Bath Guide,") and I woke up from a dream of eight months' uninterrupted enjoyment.

My views in the summer were directed to Swansea, having received an invitation from various residents, who in the winter had visited Bath and made my acquaintance. A company not numerous but meritorious was desired; among whom, it was suggested, young Incledon would prove attractive.

This was my first speculation in "management," and it proved so successful, that, to the last hour of my connection with the Stage, I continued, directly or indirectly, to fish in its troubled waters.

The only circumstance of the season that is amusing to remember, happened on Blisset's benefit. He was playing Rueful in the "Natural Son," (a part which would have ensured him the highest honours in London,) and at the moment he was about to make the disclosure to Blushenly of his birth, a party came in, who, being strangers, turned their attention to the decorations of the house, and expressed their admiration so loud as to drown every accent from the stage. Blisset stared at them an instant, indignantly and disconcerted; then taking his companion by the arm, "Come along," said he, "you can't hear me here, and I'll tell you all about it in the next room;" with which he went off, and gave vent to his vexation.

During this summer, Sir John Danvers visited Oxford, and, with the "Catch Club" engrossing his past, present, and future, called on Dr.

Hayes for advice in the purchase of an organ, which we had experienced the want of, during the past season, in the execution of many grand pieces. It had been proposed at our last meeting to subscribe for the above purpose, and among a hundred members the expense would not have been heavy; but Sir John had thrown dissuasives and obstacles in the way, with no other view, as it now appeared, than that of supplying the requisite himself. Having decided on an instrument of a peculiarly fine tone, which cost him five hundred pounds, he dispatched it to Bath in a cart, with proper people to put it up, and sent me a letter to this effect:—

“DEAR BERNARD,

“I HAVE purchased an organ (which I have sent to Arnold's) for our next winter's meetings, and I beg your acceptance of the same as a token of my esteem for your care and industry in forming what I consider to be the first society of the kind in the kingdom.

“Your's truly,

“J. DANVERS.”

This valuable present I never availed myself of, for, on quitting Bath, I gave it to the Club, and of its ultimate appropriation I am not aware ; but if my reader is surprised at the generosity of the act, as it relates to myself, he will be much more so in learning Sir John's latter conduct, which presented to it so striking a comparison.

At this period, the worthy Baronet certainly felt for me an unfeigned esteem: whether it was on purely personal grounds, or in the measure I had contributed to his enjoyments by the institution of the Club, I cannot say, but my name was continually on his lips, and I felt grateful. I knew his worth as well as his peculiarities, (for he put me in mind of one of his own silver candlesticks,—a thing that was both valuable and serviceable, though of ridiculous workmanship,)—and I was proud of the sarcasm of a Bath banterer, who observed, “Another proof of Sir John's eccentricity is his friendship for Bernard !”

With the “Catch Club” I was continually associated when absent, and this formed the one topic of our conversation when together—its plea-

tures, its progress, its patronage, its farther improvement, and its future festivities; and on one occasion, I remember, when contemplating, at the close of the winter, its comparative perfection, we looked back to its origin, he observed with a smile, "Who would have thought, Bernard, that such a society as this should have grown out of a conversation you and I had, when jogging home together one night, in two chairs side by side, our heads bobbing out of the windows, and hitting each other till they rung again?"

The season of 1785-6 rolled rapidly round, and the Theatre and Club opened with equal *éclat*; the first novelty at the one was the *début* of Mrs. Esten, whose mother, Mrs. Bennet, lived on the Parade, and visited in genteel circles; whilst our Club was strengthened by the accession of Boyton a musician, under whom Charles Dibdin acquired or completed his knowledge of thorough bass.

Dining one day at Dr. Harrington's, Boyton reminded me of Dr. Herschel, who, on my first visit to Bath, was Organist to the Octagon



Chapel, and played an instrument in the orchestra. At that period I should have alluded to him, not only as I have something amusing to say, but because I was indebted to him for my first knowledge of music. A "compunctuous visiting" of my conscience compels me now to repair the neglect.

Owing to the production of various operas at Bath, in which either serious or comic music was allotted me, I felt myself awkwardly situated, which the good-natured German observing, he proffered his services to give me private instruction, upon terms which should be arranged at a future period. This offer I gratefully accepted, and attended him twice a-week, at his own lodgings, which then resembled an astronomer's much more than a musician's, being heaped up with globes, maps, telescopes, reflectors, &c. under which his piano was hid, and the violoncello, like a discarded favourite, skulked away in one corner.

This was not the only evidence of Mr. Herschel's astrological propensities, nor were they a public secret; he had taken observations, and

communicated with philosophical societies; the consequence of which was, that he had been quizzed by the fiddlers, and called by the charitably disposed an eccentric. To his friends and to myself he alluded to these studies without embarrassment, and would modestly remark, that "all men had their failings, and this was his." When I came to him of an evening, and caught him thus employed, he would tell me with a laugh, to take care how I stepped over his "new world," and didn't run foul of his "celestial system;" and when I helped him to put his machinery aside, he had a standing joke in calling me his "Atlas," because I once carried the globe on my shoulders. When the removal was made, the fiddle was taken down, or the harpsichord opened, without farther comment

Whether it was a presage of his future success, or a constitutional complacency that fortified him so firmly against the battery of the waggish, I cannot say, but certainly no man bore a persecution of this kind with less marks of suffering. Nevertheless, I believe that his condition, in comparison with mine, was para-

disical. When it was known that I attended him privately, the actors swore that I was studying astronomy, which rendered me the butt of the Green-room, and fair game for every society I entered. I was gravely asked at table whether I “advocated Tycho Brahe, or Copernicus?” and what was my “opinion of Sir Isaac Newton’s *Treatise on Fluxions*?” whilst others stopped me in the street to inquire if I “had calculated the period of the last comet’s return.” Edwin, who was my intimate, said the severest thing. “Bernard’s got tired of ‘Earth,’ and Herschel will carry him to ‘Venus’ and ‘Mercury.’”

Notwithstanding I was so familiar with his pursuits, one evening he gave me a surprise. The opera of “*Lionel and Clarissa*” was announced, in which I was given the part of Lord Jessamy. His Lordship having a difficult song, I went as usual to my clever friend to rehearse it. It was cold and clear weather, but the sky that night was rather cloudy, and the moon peeped out only now and then from her veil. Herschel had a fire in his back-apartment, and

placed the music-stand near its window, which I could not account for. He then procured his violin, and commenced the song, playing over the air twice or thrice to familiarize me with its general idea; and then leading me note by note to its thorough acquaintance. We got through about five bars pretty well, till of a sudden the sky began to clear up, and his eye was unavoidably attracted by the celestial bodies coming out, as it were, one by one from their hiding-places: my eye, however, was fixed on the book: and when he exclaimed, “Beautiful! beautiful!” squinting up at the stars, I thought he alluded to the music. At length, the whole host threw aside their drapery, and stood forth in naked loveliness:—the effect was sudden and subduing,—“Beautiful, beautiful,” shouted Herschel, “there he is at last!” dropping the fiddle, snatching a telescope, throwing up the window, and (though it was a night in January) beginning to survey an absentee planet, which he had been long looking for.

My stone-like surprise, not to say mortifi-

cation, contrasted rather strongly with his rapturous expressions (which, by the by, seemed to welcome the star back, as though he had been an old human acquaintance), “Aha!—how—do—you—do?—I’m—glad to see—you,” &c.; and I must confess that, for an instant, I was of Lady Anne’s humour, and wished that some gentlemanly comet would come by, and brush away the intruder with his tail. The fit, however, was soon over, and then we proceeded with the song.

Herschel, when in company, owing to the above causes, was exceedingly abstracted, and would frequently listen to a long story without comprehending a word of it. This was very mortifying to the person who had been endeavouring to entertain him; and on subsequent occasions, when this absence was perceived, it grew to be a common remark with many,—“He ’s in the clouds again, he ’s star-gazing !

Nowhere more than at the theatre, in a long musical rehearsal, was he given to this celestial absorption of ideas, and nowhere so much was he exposed to sarcasm, both from the stage

and the orchestra, whenever it was perceived. At the time in question, Mrs. Baddeley came down to Bath for a few nights, and when she walked in as Polly, Herschel, who had never seen her before, was so overpowered with her beauty, that he dropped his fiddlestick and stared at her. When this was mentioned in the Green-room, Edwin quaintly remarked, "Well, 'twas nothing strange; he was *stargazing*."

Let me conclude these notices, as I would always wish to do when I cannot praise the talents, with a record to the virtues of this individual. The point of terms, though I repeatedly pressed him to settle it, he invariably deferred, saying he had not time then to talk about "terms," he had only time to give me a "lesson." At the end of the season, having regularly received my two lessons a-week, I waited on him to know what remuneration I should make; when he refused to receive a shilling, saying, "He had undertaken to teach me, because he thought I could not afford to pay any one."

Ten years after this, I met the Doctor in London, where he was established as an astronomer, and we renewed and continued our acquaintance.

Calling at Meyler's one day, I learned that Charles Dibdin was in Bath, and had been to the theatre over-night to see "Robin Hood," in which I played the Tinker. I resolved, therefore, to send him a card of invitation from the Club; this being a permission which, as Secretary, I enjoyed without limitation towards my professional brethren.

At this time Dibdin was personally unknown to me, and Boyton brought him the next club-night, and introduced him generally; but in my transition from the Tinker to the Secretary, he did not recognise me. I placed him at my right-hand, in order to show him as much attention as possible, and then commenced our convivialities with my constitutional song of, "When the gamut I got of the Conjugal State." At its conclusion, Dibdin turned to Captain Baker, who sat next him, and observed, "Mr. Bernard would make an excellent actor,"

in evident ignorance that he had seen me the night before. The Captain smiled, but was silent, and at the close of the evening acquainted me with what he had said.

The next day I met him in the street ; but by this time he had identified me. After eulogizing our meeting, as affording him five hours of unmixed satisfaction, he surprised me by observing that his business in Bath was principally on my account ; Mr. Harris having deputed him to see me act, and sound me on my views in regard to a London engagement. He said that he was not only sufficiently pleased to make a favourable report, but if I came to terms with the manager, he would take my measure for an original part in an opera he was now writing.

This intelligence and promise were very flattering, but at that time took little effect. I had no aspirations for London : by no possible combination of circumstances could I have been more happily situated than I was then at Bath. With an income sufficient to support me, the ruling favourite of the theatre, and in my



private path freely admitted to a footing with all the talent and title of the city, what more could I desire or obtain? My present possessions were certainties, but London was an untried and precarious ground, where, if it was possible I could also become the centre of the circle, a life's labour and miraculous good fortune were the necessary means.

With these sentiments, Dibdin quitted me on his return to London; notwithstanding which, I received a letter from Mr. Harris, who imagined, I believe, that I was manœuvring for terms. He offered me six pounds a-week, and my wife four, for four years, which I refused; stating, however, as my plea, that my article to Mr. Palmer did not expire till the ensuing season.

Shortly after this, Dibdin had a quarrel with Mr. Harris, and withdrew his opera: whether it was ever produced, and what became of my "character," I know not.

This season was distinguished by the *début* of Miss Brunton in the "Grecian Daughter," a girl of about sixteen, her father playing Evan-der. This was the most extraordinary evidence

of genius I ever met with : till within a week of the performance, her talents, and even inclination for the stage, were unsuspected. I can vouch for the fact, as I was so intimate with the family. Her father had taught her to read Shakspeare as a means of mental improvement ; and her proposed employment was that of a governess. Coming home from rehearsal one day, he overheard her in her bed-room reciting Calista's speech upon the unfortunate condition of her sex, which surprised him so much, that he pushed open the door, and asked her if she intended it as a personality. He was soon convinced, however, that she was ignorant of his presence, and made her repeat the speech ; its effect led him to question her, when he discovered that she was perfect in the part ; and that not only, but Juliet, Belvidera, and Euphrasia ; this was a strong symptom of the *cacoëthes ludendi*, and he summoned a consultation of advisers ; among whom was Meyler and myself. We were satisfied with a speech and scene ; and Mr. Palmer was the next day added to the number ; he was no shallow or inexpe-

rienced critic, and it was not in compliance with managerial interest that he remarked, "Here will be another Siddons!" Briefly, these events having occupied the Monday and Tuesday, on the Wednesday the young lady was on the stage rehearsing, and on the Monday following she played Euphrasia at Bristol with the most unqualified success. Her reception at Bath confirmed the triumph of that performance; and Mr. Harris, passing through Bristol on one of her subsequent nights, engaged both father and daughter for Covent Garden.

The most surprising feature of this *début* (and which I considered as the most legitimate proof of genius) was Miss B.'s extraordinary self-possession,—she moved and spoke like an experienced stager; and had I not known her from her childhood as a secluded and domestic girl, I should have sworn that she had passed every night of her life before the eyes of the public.

Sir John Danvers continued his kindness to me till the close of this winter. He had given me an organ, made me the daily occupant of his

table, and even went so far as to offer me a house on his own estate, (Sweetland Park,) with an annuity at his death, if I would quit the stage and live with him altogether. This, however, was rather too great a sacrifice for a young and happy actor to make; but I certainly promised to pass the ensuing summer at his country seat.

At the season's end, however, I found that I had indulged too liberally in its gaieties, for the good of my health; dinner-parties on non-play days, and supper-parties after the performance, were a sort of social laudanum that excited me for the time, to rack me for the future. I was in fact severely debilitated, and Dr. Harrington said that sea-bathing was the only thing to restore me.

At this period, a good many Bath people were going over to Brighton; and Fox, its manager, was advised to engage me. I was undecided in my views, when I received his letter, containing very favourable terms for the "firm," as he called Mrs. B. and myself. This spot, of all others, proposed to combine the two objects of

health and competence ; and I replied to him in the affirmative, writing to Sir John, who was now at Sweetland Park, and stating the above circumstances as an apology for the non-fulfilment of my promise.

His reply bewildered and grieved me. He charged me with ingratitude, falsehood, and meanness ; swore I had no more occasion to bathe than he had ; knew that if I had promised any one else I should have kept my word ; supposed my wife made a fool of me ; and, in short, after ransacking the dictionary for a variety of vituperatives I don't care to repeat, he took an eternal farewell of me and the Club. —And he kept his word ; not once after that did he visit the Society (at one time his only source of enjoyment) ; and when we encountered in the streets of Bath, he was stone-blind in an instant, or wanted to speak to some one over the way. This was the friendship of an eccentric.

My first visit to Brighton merits a proud record in these pages, since it created an epoch in my public history. It was there I not merely

re-established my health, but obtained the gracious notice of His Royal Highness the Prince. He was present at my *début* in Belcour and Young Wilding, and personally requested the repetition of the performances.

I believe I can boast of being the first if not the only actor who was honoured with an invitation to the Pavilion.

After this, I began to think there was even a higher state of enjoyment in store for me, than what I had been afforded in the circles of Bath.

His Royal Highness bespoke my benefit play, which was "The Liar." Mr. Weltjie came to take all the boxes, which occasioned the elevation of the pit to the box-prices. I expressed a hope that His Royal Highness would be present, though I knew that that day he dined with the Camp. That worthy gentleman replied, that I might be sure he'd come, since he had given his word: the Prince, he rejoined, "always keeps his word, but he says you are the greatest 'Liar' on the Stage."

## CHAPTER III.

1786-7.—Bath : Amateur Theatricals.—Major Halliday and his Companions.—“Brabantio’s” Address.—Criticisms on Cassio.—Captain Stanley and his comment.—Anecdotes of the early life of Sir Thomas Lawrence.—Old Lawrence the “Reader,” and Innkeeper, and Jonathan Payne.—“Little Tom’s” notoriety; his taking Edwin’s likeness; his readings.—“Tom, don’t touch Satan.”—Young Lawrence’s dramatic propensity: a Rehearsal and a Scene.—House-warming at Frome.—Handy and Captain Stanley.—A Recipe for improving Madeira.—Inclendon’s volunteered Song, and encores: his Address.—Miss Poole’s début.—Mrs. Dickons.—An attempt at Authorship.—Meyler’s hoax.—Mr. Pettingall and the “Liar.”—Death of the Earl of Conyngham.—Death of Jonathan Payne, and his Epitaph.—Engagement for London.—Brighton.—Interview with H. R. H. the Prince.—Major Hanger and Mrs. Johnson.—Sheridan and Fox.

THE winter of 1786-7 was my third and last season at Bath. The “green-room” presented no new faces; and notwithstanding we had lost Sir

John's at the Catch Club, we continued its meetings with the usual hilarity.

During the summer, Major Halliday and other members of our Club had set on foot some amateur theatricals at Bristol, which, being in aid of the funds of charitable institutions, had been well attended.

The Major wished to transfer the scene of his triumphs and benevolence to Bath, and for so laudable an object the theatre was obtained on an "off-night," and the performance was got up under the direction of the "Acting Committee." "Othello" was the play, the Major sustaining his favourite character the Moor. 'This was, with one or two exceptions, the best piece of amateur acting I ever saw. It might, however, have owed no small portion of its brightness to the foils with which, in Iago, Cassio, Brabantio, and Roderigo, it was surrounded. Many of these gentlemen seemed to justify the remark of Dr. Johnson, who was once entrapped to a similar exhibition. "I must confess I am astonished that individuals, who pride themselves so much on their dignity and sense among



friends, should be tempted to make such fools of themselves, for the amusement of strangers." Desdemona and Emilia, with the minor characters, were supported by members of the company.

On this occasion I was generally requested to officiate as prompter. I forget the gentleman's name who assumed Brabantio, but he had to speak the address. Seeing me with the paper in my hand, as the curtain was about to rise for its delivery, he hinted that he had no occasion for my services, having made himself dead perfect, to encounter an *encore*; I accordingly laid down the MS. and he made his bow. He had not delivered above ten lines, out of sixty, when he "settled," and looked round to me for assistance; but some one had taken up the neglected lines and carried them to a lamp to read; an outcry and bustle was made to obtain them; and the "public" being present, placed Brabantio meanwhile in the situation of the Eddystone Light-house during a tempest, though not so firm on his foundation.

When the address was rescued, his agitation (and the public's) was too great to permit his hearing my whispers; and after floundering on a little farther, about "British generosity," "orphans' tears," "female tenderness," "manly dignity of this Green Isle," &c. a person took pity on him in the pit, and said, "Well, my good Sir, we've no doubt you mean very well, but you only confuse us by attempting to explain!"

This sentiment meeting the general approbation of the house, dismissed Brabantio, with about forty lines in arrear, whose vexation was not slightly increased by my reminding him of his own words, as the cause of the dilemma—that "he had made himself dead perfect, to encounter an *encore*."

Captain Stanley (the "Bath Bacchus") was the Cassio of the evening. The criticism that the wags passed upon his performance was, "That for a man who could sup so well, he spouted very badly!" My reader may be inclined to say, that this was sad fun. Critically, therefore, it was misapplied to the performance

receiving professional instructions, I believe, from a Mr. Hoare, of Bath.\*

On my first visit to Bath, I became acquainted with his father, who had formerly been an actor, and was then an innkeeper at Devizes. The stage, though a relinquished, was his favourite pursuit, and he came to Bath regularly once a-week, to pass an evening in the Green-room. Here he recounted his early adventures, in connection with some member of the company, and criticized actors metropolitan and provincial. I could not learn the measure of his own talents, but he certainly deserved the fame he enjoyed of being a most excellent reader. He had a clear, full voice, and gave to Milton and to Shakspeare all their dignity and tenderness. Ability of any kind is seldom un-

\* The following anecdotes are introduced in the Original Manuscript, in their proper place, the year 1778, but were subsequently expunged by the Autobiographer, in compliance with the wishes of Sir Thomas, to whom, being on terms of intimacy, he submitted the work. The death of the latter gentleman frees the Editor from a restraint which was purely personal, and permits him, by the above means, to give a glimpse of the President's early history, which no publication has yet afforded.—January 28th, 1830.

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Lawrence not only used to entertain his friends at home (round a snug parlour fire) with his " readings," but, whenever a new play was announced, would come over to Bath, and proffer his services to the actors, to " read their parts ;" a kindness which some who intended to sponge at his house would accept, but others of more dignity declined.

The wag of the Bath Green-room (as indeed he continued to be) was Jonathan Payne, an actor of the true Joe Miller order—more famous for the good things he said off the stage than on. Payne, however, was of that particular species of humorist who is fond of a practical joke ; and the worthy innkeeper presented a notable means for the exercise of his genius.

'Rosina' was to be performed, in which Payne was cast one of the rustics. Meeting Lawrence behind the scenes, he told him that he had to play a new part the next night, and should feel extremely obliged if Mr. Lawrence would read

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‘ Rosina ’ was to be performed, in which Payne was cast one of the rustics. Meeting Lawrence behind the scenes, he told him that he had to play a new part the next night, and should feel extremely obliged if Mr. Lawrence would read

it to him. Lawrence bustled up-stairs to his dressing-room (which was that of a dozen others) with the greatest alacrity, and Payne very gravely handed him the part. Lawrence put on his spectacles, and began to con it over. "Act I. Scene I. Enter Rustic, O. P.; at end of the song, exit P. S., with groupe. Scene II. Enter Rustic, P. S., with haymakers. Exit Rustic, with ditto.—Act II. Enter Rustic, O.P. with rustics,—on till the end."

Lawrence, reading the above aloud with great deliberation and emphasis, involved himself in a mist of surprise, and his hearers in a roar of laughter. Looking up, he then exclaimed, "Read your part, Mr. Payne; I don't perceive you have a word to say."—"No, Sir," said Payne; "for, if I had, I should not have asked you."

But Lawrence at this time owed all his notoriety to his son "Tom," a boy of about nine years of age, who exhibited a wonderful precocity of talent in taking likenesses. His father, however, had taught him to read Shakspeare and Milton with considerable effect, and considered his ability in this respect (since it proceeded from himself) of a much higher order

than the former, which was natural. Nevertheless, the distinction between the two was, that as a reader "little Tom" was but little Tom—a very clever child, nine years of age, and, as a sketcher of likenesses, he disclosed the rudiments of the future powers of the President.

There was something about little Lawrence, however, which excited the surprise of the most casual observer. He was a perfect man in miniature; his confidence and self-possession smacked of one-and-twenty.

Lawrence frequently brought his boy to the Green-room, and we would set him on a table, and make him recite "Hamlet's directions to the Players." On one of these occasions Henderson was present, and expressed much gratification. The little fellow, in return for our civilities and flatteries, was desirous to take our likenesses the first time we came to Devizes; and Edwin and myself afforded him an opportunity soon after, on one of our non-play-day excursions.

After dinner, Lawrence proposed giving us a "reading," as usual; but Tom reminding him



of our promise, we preferred a specimen of his talents, as being the most novel. The young artist collected his materials very quickly, and essayed my visage the first. In about ten minutes, he produced a faithful delineation in crayon, which for many years I kept as a curiosity. He next attempted Edwin's, who, startled at the boy's ability, resolved (in his usual way) to perplex him.

No man had a more flexible countenance than Edwin; it was not only well featured, but well muscled, if I may be allowed the expression, which enabled him to throw over its surface, as on a moral prism, all the colours of expression, minutely blending, or powerfully contrasting. He accordingly commenced his sitting, by settling his face into a sober and rather serious aspect; and when the young artist had taken its outline and come to the eyes, he began gradually but imperceptibly to extend and change it, raising his brows, compressing his lips, and widening his mouth, till his face wore the expression of brightness and gaiety. Tom no sooner perceived the change than he started in

supreme wonder, attributing it to a defect in his own vision. The first outline was accordingly abandoned, and a second commenced. Tom was now more particular, and watched him narrowly; but Edwin, feature by feature, and muscle by muscle, so completely ran what might have been called the gamut of his countenance, (as the various components of its harmony,) that the boy drew, and rubbed out, till his hand fell by his side, and he stood silently looking in Edwin's face, to discover, if possible, its true expression. Edwin could not long maintain his composure at this scrutiny, and revealed the hoax with a burst of merriment that mimicked thunder.

Little Tom could not take up Shakspeare or Milton and read at random: he had been instructed in particular speeches, and to those he referred. There was one in Milton ("Satan's Address to the Sun,") he had been long wishing to learn; but his father, from an apprehension that his mind was yet unequal to its grasp, had passed it over. Tom had listened, nevertheless, whenever the former read it to a friend, and surprised

his father not slightly with the news, that he could imitate him. A family in Devizes, who were well known to Lawrence, giving a party one evening, requested the favour of his son's company for his readings. Lawrence consented, but on condition that Tom was not requested to select other than his own passages. He then cautioned his boy against attempting any thing in which he was not perfect, and particularly this Address of Satan. In the evening, Tom walked to the house, with Milton and Shakspeare under his arms, and was shown into the company with the utmost attention.

When the complimenting, &c. was over, he was asked what recitation he preferred in Milton. He replied, "Satan's Address to the Sun;" but that his father would not permit him to give it. For that reason, they were particularly eager to hear it, as they wished to discover whether Tom was a mere parrot or a prodigy. His dutiful scruples, however, were not to be overcome till they had promised to obtain his father's forgiveness. He then turned to the forbidden page, and a written slip of paper

dropped from it. A gentleman picked it up, and read it aloud—"Tom! mind you don't touch Satan!"

My reader must conceive the effect which the wording of this caution produced on the hearers. Tom, however, did have dealings with Satan, and handled him, as I was informed, with great discretion.

As young Lawrence grew up, his Shakspearian readings, and his frequent visits to the theatre, imbued him with a strong dramatic propensity, and about his sixteenth year\* he had serious intentions of making the Stage his profession.

I was now in Bath once more, but with a wonderful improvement in my fame and fortunes. No man could be more favourably situated than myself, (combining private with public advantages,) to give advice or assistance to an aspirant; and the young artist needed no introduction in coming to me for both. I heard him recite Jaffier; and though private recitation, I will admit, is at all times an imperfect cri-

\* The winter, 1785.

terion, I did not perceive, on this occasion, any evidences of talent he could balance against that which was acknowledged in his present pursuit. I desired him, however, to call on me again, and said that, in the interim, I would speak to Mr. Palmer. In the interim I met his father, and felt myself bound to disclose what had passed. Lawrence had failed in his business at Devizes, and was looking forward to his son's efforts for support. Knowing from experience the precarious fortunes of an actor, and, by this time, the value of his son's talents, he was necessarily alarmed at my intelligence, and begged I would use all my influence in dissuading him from his design. I knew young Lawrence's filial attachment, (which, among his acquaintance, was indeed proverbial,) and I suggested that the best plan would be, to achieve the desired object by a surprise. I appointed Lawrence, therefore, to come to my house the next morning, about twelve, with some friends, and sent word to his son to meet me there half an hour after. I then went to Mr. Palmer, told him the circumstance, and requested his co-

operation. He promised it most freely, and agreed to attend the rendezvous at the time appointed.

By half-past twelve, the next day, all the parties were assembled: old Lawrence and his friends, in the back-parlour; young Lawrence, Mr. Palmer, and myself, in the front. The manager was no sooner introduced than, with great adroitness, he desired a specimen of young Lawrence's abilities, and took his seat at one end of the room.

I proposed the opening scene between Priuli and Jaffier, and one between Jaffier and Belvidera. We accordingly commenced: (I, Priuli; he, Jaffier :) and he proceeded very perfectly, till, in the well-known speech of "To me you owe her," he came to the line,

" I brought her—gave her to your despairing arms ;  
Indeed, you thanked me ; but—"

but here Jaffier stammered, and became stationary. I held the book, but would not assist him, and he recommenced and stopped, reiterated, and hemmed, till his father, who had heard him with

growing impatience, could contain his vexation no longer, but, pushing open the door, thrust in his head, and prompted him to the sentence,

——— “a nobler gratitude

Rose in her soul, for from that hour she loved me,  
Till for her life she paid me with herself;”

then added, “You play Jaffier, Tom! D—n me if they’d suffer you to murder a conspirator!”

The whole party now made their appearance, and began to remonstrate; when Mr. Palmer, taking young Lawrence by the hand, assured him, in the most friendly manner, that he would do any thing to serve him; but that it was his conviction the latter did not possess those advantages which would render the Stage a safe undertaking. This address did not produce an instantaneous effect. It was obvious that the young artist entertained the reverse opinion: a conversation now ensued, in which I, abusing the life of an actor, and other friends painting the prospects of a painter, young Lawrence at length became convinced, but remarked with a sigh, “that if he could have gone on the

stage, he might have assisted his family much sooner than by his present employments."

My reader can appreciate the affection of this sentiment; but I am unable to describe its delivery, or the effect it took upon every person present. Passing over, therefore, the scene which ensued, I will only add, that young Lawrence went away renouncing his intentions and retaining his friends.

It is certainly one of my pleasantest recollections, that, by thus lending my aid to check this early propensity, (which, if encouraged, must have led to a renouncement of the pencil,) I was an agent, however humble or indirect, in the furtherance of my worthy friend's ultimate prosperity.

Handy, a tavern-keeper at Bath, was about to open the principal inn at Frome, which being the property of Lord Cork, various members of the "Catch Club" were invited to the housewarming.

Captains Baker and Stanley, Sir Charles Bampfylde, Incledon, and myself, went over in a party.



The friends and tenants from his Lordship's estate amounted to about forty, and the visitors from Bath to as many more: the dinner-tickets were half-a-guinea, exclusive of liquors.

When we were all assembled in the parlours and before the door, shaking hands, and deciding bets upon the time of each other's arrival, Captain Stanley's head, running upon an object more important, led him to enter the bar and ascertain the quality of the wines to be imbibed. Mrs. Handy drew the cork of a Madeira bottle, and filled him a glass.

The epicure took it into his mouth and rolled it deliberately about on the tip of his tongue, but shook his head, and remarked, "That won't do, Mrs. Handy,—that won't do; 'tis as weak as tea!"

Mrs. Handy expressed her regret, said she would speak to her husband the instant he came in, and some other should be substituted. The Captain then returned to the company.

I now took an opportunity of going to the bar to shake the worthy host's hand, who directly after made his appearance, and was in-

formed by his wife of the Captain's objection. Handy smiled and gave me a glass from the bottle, which I thought was very good. He then drew a glass of brandy, poured it into the undervalued liquid, and corked it up. The Captain soon returned, his peace of mind being essentially disturbed by the prospect of poor Madeira. Handy instantly apologized for (what he termed) his wife's mistake in giving a sample from a bottle not designed for the dinner, and begged the Captain's opinion upon another. Producing and filling a glass from the same, the Captain subjected it to his former ordeal, bathing his tongue in it, and scouring the roof of his mouth: an immediate effect was perceptible in his countenance, which glooming the instant before like the dead of night, lit up with a spreading smile like the dawn of a red sky in a dog-day morning. Concluding the ceremony with a smack sharp and loud as the pop of champagne, he exclaimed, "Ah, that's something like, Handy; there's some strength in that,—that's what I call a glass of good Madeira."

About nine o'clock Lord Cork vacated the chair, and I was called to it. The country-people were so astonished at our pleasantry and music, that they began to get exhilarated at an early hour; but, as this was overthrowing an established habit of the Club, I proposed that we should adjourn to the theatre, and return to our glasses about eleven. This was agreed to by two-thirds of the party, and we consequently pretty well filled the front-boxes. The entertainment was the "West Indian," in which Dowton played Belcour, then a young member of the profession, but with more than the usual evidences of future eminence.

Incledon, recognizing some acquaintance in the company, went behind the scenes, and directly after volunteered a song; this was a high treat to the pit and gallery; but the wags in the boxes were bent on other amusement. They encored him twice, and brought him on the stage for the fourth time. He now perceived their intention, and, making a low bow, addressed them as follows:—"Gentlemen, I sang this song, for the first time, to please my friends behind the

scenes; the second, to please the public; the third, to please yourselves; but if I sing it again, may I be ——!" (stopping as if to meditate a terrific oath.) "What?" shouted a dozen voices. "Why, I'll whisper you, Gentlemen, when I come round;" and with these words he returned to the boxes. This was the cleverest thing I ever knew Incledon to say or do.

During this winter, I was in some measure instrumental in bringing forward that musical prodigy Miss Poole, (afterwards Mrs. Dickons,) a child of seven or eight years of age, who sung and played some of Mrs. Billington's bravuras with ease, precision, and comparative power. I knew her father very well, and, through my connection with the "Club," was enabled to obtain him a patronage for a morning concert. This experiment not only relieved him from his difficulties, but gave that surprising little creature a launch into publicity.

During this winter also, I made my first attempt as an author, in a farce called "The Whimsical Ladies." Boyton composed its music, and took a successful measure of Incledon,

Wordsworth, Blanchard, and Miss Wright for songs; Blanchard, in particular, made a hit in the “wooing effusion of a Tailor:”

“ My dearest love,  
     My turtle-dove,  
 My suit I'll lay before you.”

This production did some good to the treasury, and Mr. Palmer gave Boyton and myself a clear joint night at Bristol, by which I cleared forty pounds, and the former (in conjunction with the sale of the songs) above a hundred.

Mr. Colman was now in Bath, and did me the favour of a call, to offer me eight guineas a-week for the ensuing summer, saying that he did this at the express wish of His Royal Highness the Prince.

A Haymarket engagement, however, interfered with the Bath and Bristol seasons, which permitted merely an interval of seven weeks; and as I had made up my mind to renew my article with Mr. Palmer, I was obliged to decline Mr. Colman's tender; assuring him, at the same time, that on my next visit to Brighton I would

properly acknowledge my Royal patron's condescension.

Meyler was as fond of a practical as a verbal joke. There was at this time residing in Bath a silk-mercier, by the name of Pettingall, who was notorious for telling little pleasant impossibilities, or, to be vulgarly laconic,—lies. He would deal them out as rapidly and good-humouredly as his patterns.

The "Young Wilding" farce was to be played, and two hours before the performance Mrs. Bernard was taken ill, and could not sustain her usual character of Miss Grantham. A lady in the company proffered her services as a substitute, on condition that she was given a book. I had lost mine, did not know where to find the prompter's, and at length ran to Meyler's, to procure a volume of the "British Drama." The particular volume which contained the piece was either out or mislaid, and all Meyler could do was to direct me to some person who might possess it. "Mr. Pettingall," said he, the silk-mercier on the Parade, is a great lover

of theatricals, and I've not the least doubt that he'll oblige you."

~ Away I scampered to Mr. Pettingall's, as no time was to be lost, and found him behind his counter attending to the wants of a dozen customers. He knew me instantly, and desisted from puffing a particular pattern, to hear my business. "Your name," said I, "is Pettingall, I believe?"—"Yes, Sir,—and you are Mr. Bernard?"—"The same: you must excuse the want of ceremony in this call; but, the fact is, we are in desperate want of a book at the theatre, and Mr. Meyler informed me that you were the most likely man in Bath to assist us."—"What play is it, Mr. Bernard?"—"The Liar, Sir."—"The what, Sir?"—"The Liar, Sir." In an instant his previously placid countenance ruffled, and grew as red as a moon in a melodrama. "D——n, Sir!" he exclaimed violently, striking the counter, "do you mean to insult me?" I stared at him in amazement; but the bystanders, who perceived the joke, turned away to suppress their laughter. "Insult! I don't know what you mean, Sir," said I.—"And I don't know

what you mean, Mr. Bernard," said he.—" Mr. Meyler," I added.—" Oh ! it was Mr. Meyler that sent you :—I 'm satisfied."

The truth was now elicited ; and, after proving my innocence, and joining with him in condemning Meyler's conduct as most ungentlemanly, I hastened back to the library, to be laughed at by the hoaxer and a dozen of his companions.

Towards the close of this season, our Club sustained a severe loss in the death of the Earl of Conyngham, who had retired to Wells a few weeks previously, to counteract a late alarming change in his health. The Society lost an elegant and intelligent director, and I, amongst many, a sincere and truly serviceable friend. Whilst equalling most in the mere ornaments of character, his Lordship could boast of all its laudable substances. He was the most perfect example of a man who derives his own happiness in the measure that he contributes to that of those who are around him.

We sustained a loss also in the theatre, though more among ourselves than with the public ; poor Jonathan Payne, the worthy and the



witty ! an actor of not much eminence, being one of that order so often alluded to in these pages—"the comedian of private life."

He had been long in a decline ; but a cause which accelerated his death was his rejection by Miss Summers, a very pretty girl in the company, whose father was a Thespian of Payne's standing. Miss Summers, on the above occasion, was said not to have exercised a perfect freedom of will, but to have sacrificed love to duty. Her father was in the habit of declaring, whenever the matter was mentioned, "If you marry Jonathan Payne, Betsy, I'll cut you off with a shilling," which amused the Bath tradespeople, as Summers had been fifty pounds in their books for the last five years.

Dr. Dart was the reverend gentleman who attended Payne in his last moments, and performed the funeral service ; and I penned the epitaph which was inscribed on his stone,—it was as follows :—

"In autumn Payne wither'd, in winter Payne died,  
For 'Summer's' sweet sunshine to Payne was denied ;  
A dart of grim Death enter'd Payne's honest breast,  
And a 'Dart' of religion consign'd him to rest."

As the season drew to a close, Mr. Harris made his appearance in Bath, and was introduced to me by Mr. Palmer, in the Green-room. He renewed his offer to me of a London engagement, but upon much higher terms, with the flattering intelligence, that the Prince, on learning my determination from Mr. Colman, had written to him, to give me a winter-footing in London. I reiterated my old objections to quitting Bath, though I could by no means express my sense of the honour which His Royal Highness had done me, in this personal interference for my advantage. I told Mr. Harris that I was more happily situated then, than ever I had been before; and so long as Mr. Palmer would give me an engagement, I did not wish to change masters. This drew a reply from the latter, who said, "The fact is, Bernard, I am about to sell a third of this property to 'Keasberry and Diamond,' and to give up all active share in its direction. Thus, if you continue here, you must pass out of my hands, and you had better do so to your own advantage. Mr. Harris, you are aware, has been wanting you these two years,

and, till the present time, I never favoured his views."

This gave a different aspect to the matter, and I promised Mr. Harris an answer the next day. The period of consideration, as my reader will suppose, was passed in the company of my wife. Watson and Jefferson, the Cheltenham and Plymouth managers, were in Bath at this time, desirous that I should join them. The one offered me a clear half of his property; the other a third, upon merely nominal terms; but the Liverpool Theatre was to let, and my good friend Mr. Peach had stood forward to say, that if I liked the speculation, he would provide me with the means. Each of these objects had some attraction in the light of my future home; and consulting my own feelings if it was imperative I should quit Bath, I certainly preferred being a country manager to a London actor; but my wife had been all her life eager to reach London, and on my account only had remained out of it so long. Her desire was to close with Mr. Harris, if he treated for us both, and select one of the above as a sum-

mer resort : her desires, as they generally did, carried the question.

The next day I met Mr. Harris at Mr. Palmer's with some friends, and we talked the affair over. I told him of the other schemes I had in view, and of the only condition upon which I would go to London, — that my wife had an opening also. Mr. Harris replied, that he was most willing to engage Mrs. Bernard, but could not promise her specific business till vacancies occurred ; he would however insert a clause in her article, which should enable her to break it at the end of the first season, if her situation was disagreeable. He then offered me ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen pounds for four years, and Mrs. Bernard five, six, seven, and eight. This was four pounds more for myself and two for my wife, than he had offered the winter previous. Before agreeing to these terms, however favourable, strict matrimonial propriety required I should submit them to Mrs. B., who, after some wincing and hesitation, permitted me to carry back to the manager her affirmative.

As this book is the record of the events, and not the feelings, of my life, I pass over the struggles it cost me to quit that city in which elapsed the three happiest winters of my existence. The Club honoured me with a farewell dinner, (though I was afterwards to mingle with many of its members in London,) and recognised my claims to its public attention on my benefit, which, with Mrs. Bernard's, produced me two hundred and fifty pounds. After a short season at Bristol, my destination was Brighton, where I was taught by Fox to expect a very favourable reception: but I had more reasons for visiting it than one.

On arriving there, my first duty was to call at the Pavilion, where I was received in the most cordial manner by my patron, who was pleased to reiterate the words of Mr. Harris, that "if I quitted Bath, there was no place I should go to but London." I told His Royal Highness that I thought he condescended greatly in taking such an interest in my fortunes. "Not at all, Bernard," he replied. "If I condescended to enjoy your talents, I certainly

may condescend to reward them:—the fact is, I consider myself in your debt for a certain sum of gratification, and I wish to balance the account by doing you as much service as lies in my power.”

We then rambled into a conversation upon the Catch Club and convivial society of Bath, with its distinguishing characters; and when we touched upon London, he was pleased to suggest that I should make my *début* in either Dashwood or Young Wilding, for the following very flattering reason:—“I like your Gentlemen, Bernard,—you do not fatigue the attention by running about,—you can act when you stand still; and I must confess to your credit, that you are the only ‘Stage Gentleman’ that has made me laugh heartily, without leading me to think I had got into *low* company.”

The night after our opening, I was honoured with an invitation to the Pavilion to meet Major Hanger, Colonel Fitzpatrick, and other convivial worthies, in connection with whom I must mention the only amusing circumstance that distinguished this summer’s trip.

A “Lady Abbess,” by the name of Johnson, had come down to Brighton with half-a-dozen “Nuns,” and took a very agreeable house on the East Cliff. Shortly after our theatricals commenced, one of the beauteous “Damiselas” had eloped with a mysterious “inamorato,” and the amiable old lady, in this serious attack on her resources, ran raving about to her acquaintance for advice and assistance. The first question to be decided was—“Who is the gallant?” and, among others, she put it to the sympathizing Major Hanger.

The Major, after a little consideration, replied that “he could fix his suspicions on no one but Bernard the Bath actor.” This wicked surmise, in the fever heat of the worthy matron, was easily converted into a conviction: away rushed Mrs. Johnson to her lodgings, and penned the following letter to the manager:—

“SIR,

“IF you do not instantly discharge Bernard the Bath actor, I shall withdraw my patronage!

“I am yours,

Fox was so delighted with this epistle, that he showed it to half his acquaintance before it came to me (amongst others to the Major); and had not my moral character stood fair both with the town and Mrs. Bernard, I should have experienced some uneasiness. Fox, however, wrote a brief reply to Mrs. Johnson, that my appearance on his boards was of more importance than hers in his boxes: but the next day, the beguiled fair one returning to the tender shelter of this inestimable lady's roof, every thing was cleared up to my honour and her satisfaction.

Fox, the Brighton manager, was a very odd character. He was a kind of Caleb Quotem in real life: he could combine twenty occupations without being clever in one; a pretty general characteristic of country managers in those days. He was actor, fiddler, painter, machinist, and tailor, besides check-taker and bill-sticker on occasions.

He prided himself more especially on his talents as a painter. He had executed all his own scenery, (as he executed all his own cha-



racters,) and accomplished in person the embellishments of the house.

Sheridan was down at Brighton one summer, and Fox, desirous of showing him some civility, took him all over the theatre, and exhibited its beauties. “There, Mr. Sheridan,” said he, “I constructed this stage,—I built and painted those boxes, and I painted all these scenes.”—“Did you?” said Sheridan, surveying them rapidly; “well, I should not have known you were a Fox by your *brush*.”

## CHAPTER IV.

1787. London.—Accident.—Honest Surgeon.—*Début* in Archer.—London Green-rooms.—The Talent of those times.—“Beef-steak Club:” its Members, Officers, &c. its Port.—Admiral Shuldham’s Pun.—Comparison of the “Beef-steak” and the “Catch Club.”—Wit and Music.—Visit to Macklin: his exaggerated Age, his Manners, his Mind—favourite Reply—the terrific play of his Features.—Anecdote of George the Second.—Macklin’s Egotism—satirized by Foote at the Haymarket.—Anecdote.—Macklin’s classic attainments: his interview with Dr. Johnson.—The two Ursa Majors.—Plymouth.—Commodore M’Bride and the Bonny Pheasant.—Sailors’ attachment to Theatres.—Anecdote of the Commodore and his Crew.—A Sailor’s complacency and benevolence.—Anecdote.—Mr. Prigmore and his Breeches.

AT the conclusion of the Bath season, I passed three weeks at the seat of my friend Mr. Peach, in Gloucestershire; and on proceeding from thence to town in a gig, the horse stumbled in descending a hill, snapped the shafts, pitched

Mrs. Bernard into a hedge, and broke my shins. The consequence of this was, that, on reaching London, I was laid up with a pair of unavailable legs, and could not contribute my services on the opening of the Theatre. A friend of my wife's family, supposed to be a surgeon, attended me, who, perceiving that I presented a favourable job, kept my wounds open, and physicked me upon the system of the doctors in Foote's farce of the "Devil on Two Sticks."

*President.* "What was the treatment yesterday?"

*Bolus.* "We jalloped the right ward, and phlebotomized the left."

*President.* "Then, jallop the left ward to-day, and phlebotomize the right."

In this manner, I lay a month upon my sofa, and had the satisfaction of reading in the papers the success of other persons in characters written for myself. My surgeon daily congratulated me on an improvement which no one but he could perceive, every morning varying his plaster, each of which was to be a specific, that invariably failed,—one day the green, the next the white, with washes of all sorts, the sole effect of

which was, to keep up inflammation, and cherish "proud flesh." Meanwhile, he completed the catalogue of his Christian perfections by preaching to me largely upon the virtue of patience. He chuckled over the job.

At length an old nurse visited me by stealth, with a pot of bitter herbs, and fomented my legs every morning, half an hour after the "friend of the family" was gone. In two days there was an obvious improvement; the inflammation was allayed, and the white flesh was disappearing. The surgeon gazed upon this effect (for I watched his features narrowly) with profound astonishment—his rascally plasters were evidently playing him false, and curing me against his will. He was forced (the labour was perceptible) to put a smile on his cheek, and I enjoyed some revenge in the pain it cost him to congratulate me now. If the roguery had not been so repulsive, the ridiculousness would have been amusing, in his crying out, "Well, Mr. Bernard, we've hit upon the plaster at last; that white dressing is invaluable."

In a week my wounds had closed, and in a

fortnight from the old woman's first visit I was enabled to draw on a pair of new boots, and make my bow to a London audience in the characters of Archer and Kecksey; Mrs. Bernard appearing with me in Mrs. Sullen and the Irish Widow. The boxes, on that occasion, presented so many well-known faces from Bath, that our favourable reception was ensured, and we repeated the characters.

My engagement with Mr. Harris was to sustain the business of Lee Lewis, which was very extensive, including all the fops and eccentric gentlemen, with smart servants and feeble old men *ad infinitum*. The following were among my principal characters:—Young Marlow, Dashwould, Captain Absolute, Duretete, Gratiano, Puff, Sharp, Lissardo, Young Philpot, Flutter, Clodio, Lord Trinket, Lord Sparkle, Sir Brilliant Fashion, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Verges, &c., with five characters, which were specified in my article—Lord Ogleby, Twineall, Michael Perez, Don John, and Young Wilding.

In all of these, my stand was such as to

answer the expectations of my friends at Bath, and my Royal patron at Brighton.

I have made it a practice to give the "green-rooms" of every theatre I entered; but, on reaching London, where the characters and talents of every public favourite have been so sufficiently known and recorded, I think this duty is indispensable. I shall do no more, therefore, than enumerate the dramatic (not the vocal) forces of each house, for my reader to make his own comparisons.

At Covent Garden, the principals were—Holman, Pope, Lewis, Brunton, Farren, Edwin, Ryder, Quick, Wilson, Blanchard, and Bernard; Miss Brunton, Mrs. Mattocks, Mrs. Esten, Mrs. Wells, and Mrs. Bernard.

At Drury Lane—Kemble, Bensley, Palmer, Wroughton, J. Bannister, King, Parsons, Suett, Dodd, and Baddeley; Mrs. Jordan, Miss Farren, Miss Pope, and Mrs. Siddons.

Miss Brunton had superseded Miss Younge at our house, and Miss Farren Mrs. Abingdon at the other. Henderson's death, (the "dim-

ming of our Shining Star,") and Mrs. Siddons' triumph at Drury Lane, gave to that house a decided preeminence in tragedy; but our comic strength was more upon a par. Leaving this point to my reader's decision, there is but one I would wish to establish,—that the collective talent of the metropolis was greater in those days than it has been since. It is generally admitted, that the race of dramatists has degenerated tremendously. We had then Sheridan, Colman, sen., Colman, jun., Cumberland, Murphy, Holcroft, with O'Keeffe, Hoare, Dibdin, Morton, and Reynolds about beginning. I know of no names in the present day that can be contrasted with even the weakest of these in the composition of comedy, opera, or farce: one thing is remarkable, that the talent of that day was decidedly comic. Jephson was the only one who wrote a tolérable tragedy, and his memory has not been preserved by the Stage. The tragic genius of England descended into the tombs of Otway, Southerne, and Rowe.

Between the dramatist and the actor there

seems to have been a peculiar sympathy both in their talent and fate;—they have flourished and faded in much the same manner. Particular instances are cited, in the present day, of actors whose excellence may vie with those I have above recorded. This is true!—but this is all! Plays are now written and represented for these “particular instances” solely. It was the peculiarity of that period, that a play should be considered unworthy of a Theatre Royal, unless it contained at least six prominent characters; and farther, that such play was unjustly dealt with, if the meanest character was not as perfectly represented as the highest.

Blanchard and Mrs. Esten had made their *début* with me at Covent Garden. So that with Pope and Edwin, who were intimates of old, I found myself at home in the Green-room. I now thought of my letters of introduction, and by their means began to make the circuit of the convivial societies. My first visit was to the “Beef-steak Club,” where I had the distinction of being proposed an honorary member the first night. This was owing to my “Bath” noto-



riety: Kelly, Dignum, Sedgwick, and Suett, those unrivalled glee singers, with Charles Bannister, were the only other professionals enjoying the same privilege. Here I was introduced to Sheridan, Selwyn, Woodfall, Topham, Bate Dudley, Miles Andrews, Merry, Taylor, Howardine, Saville Carey, Stevens, Colonel Boswell, Major Arabin: that galaxy of table wits, in whose lustre the Royal Brothers delighted to sun themselves, and whose union formed an epoch in the convivial history of London.

The society consisted of forty members, one-third of whom were noblemen; of these, Lords Townshend, Cavan, Galway, and Say and Sele, were the most noted. Captain Morris was the Secretary; Mr. Bearcroft, the Recorder; Stevens, the Poet-laureate; and Dr. Kennedy, the Physician.

The cook and wine-keeper had salaries of fifty pounds each, though the perquisites of the former, in the remains of meat, &c. doubled that amount. Pork and mutton-chops were provided for visitors who disliked the established viand; but they were seldom called for, the anti-

nationality of such a taste disgusted true-born Britons; and it was an impression with foreigners, that unless they eat the "beef-steak," they could not enter into the spirit of the Club. Port was the established liquid: two pipes of which were received yearly,—one to be divided into quarter casks for the four senior members in rotation,—the other to be put to nurse in the cellar, three years in wood, and four in bottle.

This wine rendered the meeting nearly as famous as its wit; its equal was not to be produced in England: all respectable bacchanals swore by it; all tavern-keepers and Oporto merchants thronged to taste it; and it was able, on one occasion, to seduce that sensible man Admiral Shuldam to commit a pun. When asked at the "Beef-steak" what season of the year he preferred being at sea, he touched his glass and replied, "When I can't be in Port!"

The chairman, treasurer, and secretary of this meeting wore a uniform which was peculiar and pleasing: it was a blue coat, with a red collar, and a golden gridiron suspended

from a button-hole by a blue ribbon, black silk indispensables, and stockings.

My first visit to the "Beef-steak" enabled me to perceive how differently it was constituted from the "Catch Club." If I could designate this difference by a word, I should say that the one was a talking and the other a singing society. At the "Beef-steak" there was less music; because it was to be heard at so many other meetings in comparative perfection, besides public places,—and because there was more talent in the members to sustain long conversations. Music was a relief to them; but if it had exceeded a song or a glee, it would have proved an interruption. Kelly, Dignum, and Sedgwick, compassed all their desires; and composers, conductors, and instrumental performers, were got rid of *in toto*. The members were all men of the world, and (London being a large cauldron, in which society is kept continually in a ferment, and something new is hourly rising to the surface,) they had well-stored heads to unburthen on coming together. Thus the Club wore the air more of a casual than a regular assembly.

At Bath, the case was contrary. There, the members seemed to form but one family,—the business of the Club their only employment,—the pleasures of the Club were certainly their only excitement. They looked forward to them, week after week, as their sure means of balancing accounts with divers cares and disappointments. This gave the Club a great refinement and selectness; but as there was so little stirring in the town, to furnish food for conversation, it was necessary that, by previous arrangements, a certain stock of amusement should be provided in the music.

In point of patronage, these Clubs were much upon a par: the talents of the two were of an opposite kind, private and professional: for wit, the “Beef-steak,” concentrating the rays of the metropolis and the, age was above comparison; whilst for music, the “Catch Club” would have borne comparison with any similar institution in the world.

One of my letters of introduction was from Colonel Ware of Plymouth to Macklin, and I took an early opportunity of delivering it.

When I knocked at his door, I was shown into his study, and found him seated at a table, surrounded by a variety of unfinished dramas, that had been designed and commenced in the maturity of his powers, to be completed in their decay.

Every body knows that, in the year 1787, Mr. Macklin was a gentleman considered to be about ninety-five years of age, who was more generally talked and written about than any other member of his profession; that he was styled the Nestor, the Methusalem, and the Thomas Parr of the Stage,—the father and the wonder of the dramatic world: the “wonder,” with the critics, was, justly, the strength and freshness of his mental faculties; but his uncertain and exaggerated age was sufficient with the gallery amateurs;—that his sun should have stood still when a hundred others had set; that people’s grandfathers remembered him a middle-aged man; that no book could tell his beginning, and no man prophesy his end,—for he had as little appearance of dying now, as when the generation around him was at nurse. I believe many old women suspected that, from his connection with the Stage, he was

in possession of the elixir vitæ (that being an unlawful secret); and he told me, that in the country a man once asked him “if he had not come over with King Charles at the Restoration!”

Every body, also, I presume, must have had some information respecting Macklin’s person and manners; that he was a broad-breasted, bald-headed, shaggy-browed, hooked-nosed individual, as rough and husky as a cocoa-nut, with a barking or grunting delivery more peculiar than pleasing, which to musical ears made him something like a ‘bore.’ Any particular description would be therefore uninteresting; but I may be permitted a few remarks as introductions to the anecdotes I shall tell of him.

If good manners are to be gleaned from a collision with society, Macklin’s were bad, because throughout life he had been chiefly his own company. His manners grew out of his mind, which, being powerful and profound, cared not for oil or ornament, so long as it could express itself with vigour and conciseness.

Macklin’s early education had been scant, and his mind had taken a long while to grow. At

forty, he told me, he began to understand the English grammar, and at sixty he was versed in that of the Latin, Greek, French, and Italian languages. Macklin had not read much ; but he had digested what he had read, and reflected upon what he had observed. From sixty to ninety-five, he had been laying up his knowledge, which, as the fruit of experience, would have been of the best kind had not prejudice spoiled it, as heat mostly does grain. However, he had two of the qualities of an instructive companion,—his information was extensive, and his ideas were specific and practical ; but he was taken very seldom with the fit of being entertaining. No man could be more arbitrary in argument, or half so egotistical in familiar recollections. The chain of his conversation invariably wound round that centre-pin—himself; his own fame, his own merits, his own admirers, were the themes, which if you could listen to and be amused with, you might command his tongue for the day. But if, in the midst of a favourite theory, you happened to demur or start what appeared to be the symptom of a

contradiction, he stopped short, looked in your face, as much as to warn you from your opinion; then flung aside detail for debate, and put himself in the attitude of one who wanted to eat, and so defeat you. A little opposition, however modest or rational, chafed him; and when excited, he grinned, glared, and barked at you like a wolf-dog. Being determined to triumph, (particularly with young men,) if his arguments failed to convince, and the terrible play of his features to confuse you, he had a *corps de reserve* in one reply, which to few men of the past century could be misdirected—"Oh, you think so, do you? well then, all I can say is, that when you have lived in the world as long as I have, you'll think differently."

The terrific effect of his features, when under excitation, has been recorded in his performance of Shylock. The most amusing proof I have heard upon the point, was as follows:—

When he had established his fame in that character, George the Second went to see him; and the impression he received was so powerful, that it deprived him of rest throughout the



night. In the morning, the premier (Sir Robert Walpole) waited on the King, to express his fears that the Commons would oppose a certain measure then in contemplation. "I wish, your Majesty," said Sir Robert, "it was possible to find a recipe for frightening a House of Commons?"—"What do you think," replied the King, "of sending them to the Theatre to see that Irishman play Shylock!"

Macklin's vanity, and introduction of the letter *I*, to the discomfiture of every other in the alphabet, was the sharpest thorn to his friends, and readiest weapon of his enemies. When Foote commenced his dramatic satires at the Haymarket, Macklin was beginning to get popular as a teacher of elocution, and the humorist resolved to give a whole-length of him, among others.

He represented Macklin in his arm-chair, examining a pupil in the classics. "Well, Sir,—did you ever hear of Aristophanes?"—"Yes, Sir,—a Greek dramatist, who wrote"—"Ay, but I have got twenty comedies in those drawers, worth his 'Clouds' and stuff.—"

Do you know any thing of Cicero?"—"A celebrated orator of Rome, who, in the polished and persuasive, is considered a master of his art."—"Yes, yes; but I'll be bound he couldn't teach elocution!"—"Perhaps not, Sir."—"Perhaps, then, you have heard of one Roscius, whom Cicero praised?"—"Certainly, Sir,—a very celebrated actor."—"Stuff! he couldn't have played Shylock!"

This exhibition being laughed at, and talked of greatly, it was very natural that, among others, Macklin himself should go to see it. To escape observation, he placed himself on a back-seat in the boxes. The important scene came on; and as Foote convulsed the house with his successful mimicry, Macklin writhed and muttered, not knowing whether to run out, or upon the stage. Foote wound up this display with a kind of charge to his pupil.—"Now, Sir, remember; I, Charles Macklin, tell you, there are no good plays among the ancients, and only one great one among the moderns, and that's the 'Merchant of Venice;' and there's only one part in that, and only one man that

can play it ;—now, Sir, as you have been very attentive, I'll tell you an anecdote of that play : when a Royal Personage, who shall be nameless, (but who doesn't live a hundred miles from Buckingham House,) witnessed my performance of the Jew, he sent for me to his box, and remarked, ' Sir, if I were not the Prince—ha—hum—you understand—I should wish to be Mr. Macklin !' Upon which I answered, ' Royal Sir, being Mr. Macklin, I do not desire to be the ——.' ”

Macklin could no longer contain himself ; but starting up, he stretched his body forward, and shouted, “ No, I'll be d—d if I did.” In an instant the audience turned and opened on him like a pack of hounds : hunted from the boxes, he speedily descended the stairs, and, in the manner of Sir Anthony Absolute, took six steps at a time.

The most whimsical anecdote of Macklin I ever heard, was one in connection with Dr. Johnson. The author and the actor were never very intimate : being cast in much the same mould of mind, they were noted for similar in-

firmities: they were equally rugged and positive, imperious, and cynical. When Macklin grew into notice as a man of letters, (a truth that Garrick, not his greatest admirer, deposed to,) the Ursa Major of literature paid the Ursa Major of theatricals a visit, to ascertain the extent of his pretensions. Macklin showed him his library, and seemed to have a sufficient knowledge of every work it contained. They then sat down to converse, and rambled over a variety of subjects, upon all of which Macklin kept his legs, to the Doctor's satisfaction. When grappling upon the level ground of an equally well understood question, their strength seemed to be equal. The Doctor, nevertheless, was desirous of overthrowing him before they parted, and touched on the score of his classic attainments. Greek and Latin the actor knew as intimately as French and Italian, and defended himself grammatically and colloquially, from every thrust of the lexicographer. Johnson, growing more determined from the failure of his attempts, at length addressed him with a string of sounds perfectly unintelligible. "What's

that, Sir?" inquired Macklin. "Hebrew!" answered Johnson. "And what do I know of Hebrew?"—"But a man of your understanding, Mr. Macklin, ought to be acquainted with every language!" The Doctor's face glowed with a smile of triumph.—"*Och neil en deigen vonsh't hom boge vaureen!*" exclaimed Macklin. Johnson was now dumb-founded, and inquired the name of the lingua? "Irish, Sir!"—"Irish!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Do you think I ever studied that?"—"But a man of your understanding, Doctor Johnson, ought to be acquainted with every language!"

During the winter, Jefferson, the veteran of Drury Lane, came to London, and made his old proposal to me of joining him for the summer at Plymouth. From the good character I heard of this depôt, I conceived that I could not make a more favourable selection, and agreed to purchase one-third from Jefferson, who held two, for four hundred pounds; the other being in the possession of a Mr. Wolf, who proved to be one in sheep's clothing.

To Plymouth I accordingly proceeded at the

close of the season, where I was welcomed by my friend Colonel Ware, and by him introduced to Governor Campbell, and Mr. Wynn the Mayor. It was my good fortune also to encounter two schoolmates, Lieutenants Ross and Howe, whose respective ships were lying there under the command of Admiral Innis and Commodore Macbride; to these gentlemen, together with Mr. Evan Nepean, secretary to Admiral Milbank, they made me known, and enabled me to secure for the Theatre their important patronage.

Our season opened, continued, and concluded most successfully: blue uniforms thronged the boxes, and there was a strong muster nightly, in pit and gallery, of tarpaulin toppers, and pigtails.

Commodore Macbride was our most serviceable friend; he was nearly as fond of theatricals as cock-fighting;—this latter propensity, however, was the more notorious. He had a farm near Plymouth, where he reared his game fowls; they were distinguished throughout the West of England, being half pheasants, by which mix-

ture he had found the chicken to possess a stronger beak, and, though smaller in size, to be improved in its activity. It was owing to this, that his ship, the "Bienfaisant," was rather humorously Englished by the sailors "The Bonny Pheasant!"

Sailors in general, I believe, are very fond of playhouses : this may be partly because they find their ships workhouses, and partly because the former are the readiest places of amusement they can visit when ashore. I remember, on my first trip to Plymouth, I was rather startled at observing the effect which acting took on them, as also their mode of conducting themselves during a performance. It was a common occurrence, when no officers were present, for a tar in the gallery, who observed a messmate in the pit that he wished to address, to sling himself over and descend by the pillars, treading on every stray finger and bill in the way. When his communication was over, and before an officer could seize him, up again he went, like a cat, and was speedily anchored by the side of "Bet, sweet Blossom."

The pit they called the hold ; the gallery, up aloft, or the maintop landing ; the boxes, the cabin ; and the stage, the quarter-deck. Every general and gentleman, they saluted as a skipper ; every soldier was a jolly, or a lobster ; and the varieties of old and young men, who were not “in command,” were collectively designated swabs. Jefferson, being the eldest, was a Rear-Admiral, and I was a Commodore.

What they disliked the most in representation was a sea-fight ; some blunder or deficiency was sure to lay bare the artifice, and put them out of temper : either our ships cantered over the seas, or they could perceive the submarine Gullivers who were working them : on such occasions, they were much more noisy than the vessels. On the contrary, what most delighted them was a land-fight, particularly if Richard or Macbeth took a good deal of killing,—they were all alive at a dying scene : but they required the villain, whoever he was, to roll about a few minutes, like a jolly-boat in a tempest, in order to evince the pangs of his



conscience and his wounds, when a *secundum artem* kick and shiver to conclude were the sure precursors of their thunder.

They had, however, more gallantry than patriotism, and preferred that the combat and triumph should turn on the emancipation of a female than a country. The ladies they eulogized under the form of frigates, and their stems and sterns. Stays, bend, bows, and beam-ends—sky-scrapers (their feathers) and spankers (their trains), were severally subjected to a critical observance. What touched their feelings the most was a love-scene: the tears of a young couple took them “all aback;” injustice to the girl called down audible murmurs “to belay;” the desperate resolutions of her lover, to requite her, were invariably cheered, and the triumphant hug, when the happy pair came together at the end of the piece, was the full perfection of their dramatic enjoyments.

A circumstance occurred during this first managerial trip to Plymouth, which was rather amusing. Intelligence having reached Govern-

ment that some Dutch privateers were cruizing in the Channel, to the jeopardy of our coasting vessels, Commodore Macbride received orders to get his ship ready for sea with the utmost expedition. The *Bienfaisant* was at this time in dock, and he set the whole crew to work on her, promising them on the Monday, that if they swam her by the Thursday following, he would "treat them all to the play." The tars "turned-to" in the necessary manner night and day, and by the specified time the *Bienfaisant* floated fit for the ocean. That very evening, however, a breeze springing up, the Admiral was obliged to disappoint his men of their reward, and put to sea. The day after, he encountered the enemy, sunk one, and on the Saturday morning brought the other into harbour.

When the Commodore's heart was filled with the triumph of the action, and the town's-people were thronging on board to offer him their congratulations, he perceived the boatswain and the crew collected in the fore-castle discussing some subject with unusual earnest-

ness. The boatswain approaching him soon after, he inquired what the men wanted—"Not their prize-money already?"—"No, your Honour," answered Jack; "they want to go to the play, as your Honour promised last Thursday."

The Commodore smiled, and despatched a note to me, expressive of his wishes. Bills were immediately struck off, and dispersed through the town; and under the *éclat* of the late triumph, our temple of Thespis was overflowed at the opening of the doors.

Two of the most genuine characteristics of a Jack, I consider to be his complacency and benevolence. This summer, at Plymouth, I witnessed a curious display of both. A crowd of people were surrounding, and endeavouring to secure, a bull which had escaped from its owner. The beast, exhausted with a chase about the streets in one of the hottest days of July, stood still and panted; but, by his low growl and significant position of the horn, betokened he was not unprepared for his pursuers. After many ineffectual attempts to seize him by ropes, &c. an honest Jack came forward, and

began to swear at them lustily, for their manner of treating the national beast of Old England. "Avast, you lubbers!—a turn," said he, "and see how I'll take him in tow!—Here, Billy, Billy, Billy!—There, don't you see how he nods at me? Only treat him civilly, and like a gentleman, he'll come-to directly." As he said this, Jack, sure enough, approached the brute, and, patting his forehead, threw one arm over his neck, leant carelessly against him, and, laughing at their fears, abused the mob for their violence.

"See here!" said he; "here have I laid myself quietly alongside, and Billy's as gentle as a young Marmselle. An't you a pretty set of swabs, to treat a dumb hanyamal in this way?—Where's a noose? Splinter me, if I was his howner, I'd sarve you out.—Poor Billy!"

He had scarcely spoken these words, (making a sign that they should throw him a rope,) before the bull, slipping his horns from under Jack's arm, thrust them between his legs, and in an instant elevated him five feet above his back. Jack lighted upon the hard pavement,

amidst the roars of the multitude. Rising up, and rubbing the saluted part, he glanced his eye at the bull, and exclaimed, with a mixture of indignation and regret — “Sheer off, you bl—y swab ! you bears malice !”

Our company this season was more select than numerous ; Jefferson in the old men, serious and comic, was a host. Wolf, my other partner, was a respectable actor ; and Mrs. Bernard and myself were established favourites from the metropolis. Among the corps was a Mr. Prigmore, a gentleman of some vanity and little merit, whose opinion of himself was in an inverse proportion to that of the public. One of the peculiarities of this person was to suppose (though he was neither handsome nor insinuating) that every woman whom he saw, through a mysterious fatality, fell in love with him.

There was a very benevolent widow living in Plymouth, in respectable circumstances, who frequently came to the Theatre, and was kind enough to inquire into the private situations of various members of the company. Among

others she asked about Prigmore, and was told that he had but a small salary and made a very poor appearance. Hearing this, she remembered that she had a pair of her late husband's indispensables in the house, which she resolved to offer him. A servant was accordingly dispatched to the object of her charity, who meeting one of the actors, and partly disclosing her business, he went in search of Prigmore, and finding him exclaimed, "Prigmore, my boy, here's your fortune made at last; here's a rich widow in the town has fallen in love with you, and wants to see you."

Prigmore not suspecting his roguery, was led to the servant, in a state of bewildered rapture, and by the latter was informed that the widow would be glad to see him any morning it was convenient. He appointed the following, and went home to his lodgings to indulge in a day-dream of golden independence. His friend, in the mean time, whispered the truth through the Green-room, where there were two or three others wicked enough to join in the conspiracy, by walking to Prigmore's house to tender their

congratulations. Prigmore, as will be supposed, passed a sleepless night, and spent an extra hour at his toilette the next morning, in adorning himself with a clean chin and neckcloth.

He then sallied forth, and, on reaching the widow's, was shown into her parlour, where, casting his eyes around on the substantial sufficiency of its furniture, he began to felicitate himself on the aspect of his future home.

The lady at length appeared : she was upon the verge of forty ; a very fashionable age at that time, which resting on the shoulders of a very comely-looking woman, seemed to be in character with her very comfortable dwelling. Prigmore's satisfaction and her benevolence operated equally in producing some confusion : at length a conversation commenced. She acquainted him that she had heard his situation was not as agreeable as he could wish,—that his income was a confined one ; she was therefore desirous to do him all the service that lay in her power. Prigmore, considering this an express declaration of her affection, was about to throw himself at her feet, when she suddenly sum-

moned her servant and exclaimed, "Rachel, bring the breeches!"

These words astounded him, and he stared in her face like a block of marble; the widow, as suspicionless as himself of the hoax, could not interpret his wonder; but on receiving the habiliment, folded them carefully up, and remarking that they were as good as new, (her husband having caught his fatal cold in them the first time he put them on,) begged Prigmore's acceptance of the same.

"And was it for this you wanted me, Madam?" exclaimed Prigmore, rising from his chair; his tone and countenance bespeaking a mixture of surprise and disappointment.—"Yes, Sir." He put on his hat, and walked to the door in silent indignation. The good woman, as much astonished as himself, followed him, and said, "Won't you take the breeches, Sir?"—"No, Madam," he replied, pausing at the door to make some bitter remark—"Wear them yourself!"

For the remainder of the season, his life was far from being enviable.



## CHAPTER V.

1788-9.—London.—Bucks' Lodge.—Assume the Secretaryship of the Beef-steak Club.—Scale of the Members' Qualities.—Anecdotes of Sheridan and Fox, Bannister, Miles, Peter Andrews, Della Cruscan Merry, Bate Dudley, Bearcroft, Woodfall, Major Arabin, and Barry the Hatter.—Lord Galway's Wagery.—"Peg Timber-toe."—The three "Stage Gentlemen," Smith, Lewis, and Garrick.—Exchange no robbery.—Story of a Watch.—Accession of Characters.—Edwin's Indisposition: its meaning.—Dinner of the "Marine Society."—The Boys' hit at the "Spanish Ambassador."—Admiral Afflick's atrocity.—The "Anacreontic Society."—Stevens, Morris, and Hewardine.—Hewardine's "Literary Kidnapping," and detection of Bate Dudley.—How to remember a Story.—Plymouth.—Mr. B. R. Haydon's first attraction of the public notice.

1788-9 was my second winter in London, the first event of which worthy to be recorded in these pages was my becoming a member of the "Bucks' Lodge," Cateaton Street,—a society that, for the harmony and hilarity of its meet-

ings, had few superiors in the metropolis. The anniversary ball and supper was given on a scale of great elegance.

The next and more important circumstance, was my becoming Secretary to the "Beef-steak Club."

His Royal Highness the Prince had, this winter, instituted a convivial meeting under his own roof, to the secretaryship of which he appointed Captain Morris. The latter gentleman, being unable to fulfil the duties of two offices, necessarily seceded from the Beef-steak, and for the honours of the latter there were not a few competitors. But the great proportion of our visitors had either visited or belonged to the Catch Club, (Captains Baker and Stanley in particular,) and these gentlemen, whenever alluding to that society, were so much in the habit of referring its prosperity to my exertions, that the Committee were induced to tender me the vacant chair. I was highly proud to accept it, with some foundation for my pride, in having obtained it unasked for.

It is unnecessary to allude to the duties of

this office, (which were very similar to those at Bath, though not quite so extensive,) as my reader can only be interested by the event, (though an epoch in my career,) in the proportion that it increased my intimacy with those I controlled. The fruits of this intimacy I will give in as few words as possible—first, by subjoining a sort of scale of the different qualities of the most noted members, and then by relating as many little peculiarities and original anecdotes of each as I can recollect.

## THE SCALE.

			Good humour.	Wit.	Humour.
Sheridan	.	.	0	3	0
Selwyn	.	.	2	2	0
Andrews	.	.	2	2	0
Merry	.	.	3	1	2
Topham	.	.	2	1	0
Woodfall	.	.	3	1	0
Bate Dudley	.	.	3	1	0
Taylor	.	.	3	1	3
Hewardine	.	.	3	1	3
Saville Carey	.	.	3	1	3
G. A. Stevens	.	.	2	1	2
Major Arabin	.	.	3	1	3
Bearcroft	.	.	2	1	0
C. Bannister	.	.	3	2	3

I could extend this list; and in refraining from so doing, must neglect many names of merit and celebrity; but it is sufficient to show in what proportions the elements of our club-harmony consisted.

Of the above, the most constant in attendance were—Merry, Andrews, Topham, Woodfall, Dudley, Arabin, Bannister, with Lords Galway and Cavan.

Stevens and Carey came whenever they were in town. Taylor and Hewardine, belonging to other clubs, could not give us an undivided attention; but we had Cumberland, Colman, Pilon, Peter Seguin, and a dozen other visitors, to supply their places.

Sheridan and Selwyn, our most brilliant stars, were the most eccentric and uncertain. The latter, however, was getting aged and taciturn.

Sheridan sometimes brought Fox with him: they were then another Damon and Pythias. Of the comparisons that were instituted between these gentlemen in public, I pretend to no opinion; but in society no two men could present a greater contrast. The “Champion of the

People" appeared to be the stupidest person at the table, till he had imbibed his bottle; and he then woke up, to put the whole room to silence with his laughter; whilst Sheridan kept firing and blazing away for the evening, like an inexhaustible battery.

Fox had all the taste for this society, but not the talents: no man could be more affable, or more completely satisfied with his company. If he did not throw fuel on the flame, he enjoyed all its light and heat: if he spoke not till he was spoken to, he evidently felt and understood every good thing that was said, by the nature of his applause, which was a lengthened roar, in no bad imitation of thunder. From this latter peculiarity, combined with the truly John Bull characteristics of his face and figure, I should certainly have taken him for an alderman of the old school, had we not been introduced.

Sheridan, I observed, never exerted himself so palpably as when Fox was present; there was a perceptible effort on these occasions, which implied he had a higher object in view

than that which the Society usually afforded. It struck me, however, that his spontaneous sallies were equally successful.

Sheridan was not, in the truest sense of the word, a convivialist ; he had no *bonhomie*, or what an Englishman understands by the word, —good humour ; he was a satirist, and fonder of detecting the follies of his companions than admiring their talents or virtues: in lieu of good humour, he had great vanity. He went into society, not to sympathize with even clever men, but to find an audience. He required to be the centre of the circle ; he seldom laughed, but in the manner of Sir Archy M'Sarcasm ; and he could only talk, under the excitement of the general attention ; so that he secured this attention. I don't think he was particular as to the grade of his companions (provided they were not fools) ; but his comparative coldness and indifference to the general sources of merriment, his evident absorption in himself, led me to think that he did not come among us in the way of other men, but rather to play a part, in which

he concerted his startling brilliances, and derived his gratification solely from the effect they produced.

His wit, with all the effervescence and pop of champagne, had undoubtedly too often the sour sharpness of cyder. I have heard it rather happily compared to a steel, which is polished and pointed,—and to an icicle, which is pointed also, but cold and glittering. I think that, personally, he bore the most resemblance to a torpedo, which can electrify without being electrified.

After Sheridan, Fox used to be most pleased with Charles Bannister, whose quiet and sustained humour contrasted strongly with the sudden flashings of the manager's wit. It was the difference of daylight and lightning. One evening, I remember, Fox was seated between Sheridan and Bannister, and did nothing but fill their glasses and listen to their conversation; whilst they, making his head a kind of shuttlecock, hit it on each side with such admirable repartees, that he roared aloud like a bull.

Andrews was a witty man, but his sayings were like fireworks ;—they startled you one instant, to leave you in utter darkness the next. You always admired what he said, and yet you never could remember it. This might have been owing to his mode of delivery.

We had four authors in the Club, and three editors ; Andrews was one of the former ; he was the pro and epilogue writer of the day, having achieved five or six plays which had failed, and about a hundred of the former compositions that were successful. He was not, however, satisfied with this fame or his other experience, and contemplated daily fresh attempts at the drama. Mentioning this matter to Sheridan one day, with the hope of getting advised to proceed, the former replied, “ I tell you what, Andrews,—you succeed very well in the head and tail of a play, but you ’d break down in the main, depend on it.”

In these “ heads” and “ tails,” Andrews contrived to satirize the follies of the day with some effect, but laid himself open to the retaliation of the public by a peculiarity which



distinguished Foote—a fondness for titled society, and a propensity to laugh and lash at it when he mixed in any other. He was noted for his attentions to a certain nobleman, whose deficiency of intellect and sufficiency of arrogance were equally unpleasing. “Why, Andrews,” said a friend to him, “every body says you are Lord Lyttelton’s shadow.”—“I don’t know how his Lordship can have a shadow,” he replied, “when every body says they can see through him.”

One of the best things I can remember was in connection with his employments. Some one asked him “why he had never married;” pointing out various favourable opportunities in families that he visited. “I can’t say,” he replied, “but it’s natural for a gunpowder maker to be afraid of a *match*.”

Of all men in the Club, Merry had the greatest proportion of that which, in my “Scale,” I intended by the term good-humour,—that cheerful, placid, and benevolent mould of mind which can bear all its own peculiarities being laughed at, without wishing to laugh at another’s in

return. Never was a man's name a greater echo to his character than Merry's. Mrs. Inchbald's vocabulary might have been challenged for so felicitous an instance. Merry seemed to live in a perpetual spring; all was sunshine and freshness with him, and his heart overflowed with its happiness, like a sparkling fountain.

He was not so witty as Andrews, or so original; but he was rather the pleasanter companion of the two, for he had more oil and less vinegar. Their talents were very different. Merry couldn't write satire, (it was as little in his head as his heart,) nor, being akin to it, a comedy; but he had attempted some dozen reams of tragedies. His *chef-d'œuvre* he presented to Mr. Harris, who returned it with this remark, that "it was a good cup of tea spoiled by too much milk and sugar!" Nothing could have more aptly characterized his writings, in which the design was generally good; but from the universal amiability of the characters, and the abundance of love scenes, a fatal insipidity was engendered. Merry would never acknowledge

a villain for his acquaintance, even upon *paper* : to balance this failure, he had succeeded very greatly, as all the world knows, in the composition of a certain kind of poetry, called “The Della Cruscan.” These effusions used to be quizzed by the Club, who were more attached to the George Stevens, Tom Hewardine, and Captain Morris school. Topham’s paper, “The World,” was his favourite medium to the public; and something appearing in it which contained allusions to our meeting, a dozen of us bought the paper, and brought it to the room: its successive production round the table raised a laugh and flattered Merry greatly. It was then proposed by Topham, that the lines should be read aloud by Mr. Suett. Dicky required first to look over them, and boggled a good deal in investigating the sentiments; at length he exclaimed — “Roses, posies, lilies, tulips! why, you are as *floury*, Mr. Merry, as a miller.” — “Then,” observed Bannister, “he must be a poet in grain.”

Cumberland made the wittiest remark on

Merry's verses: he said, "they put him in mind of a bouquet of artificial flowers; they had all the bloom, without the *scents*."

One of the most amusing circumstances of Merry's literary life was the following.—Though he had little wit, he had some humour, and made nearly as good puns as poetry.—Andrews had written a comedy, in which he had sketched all the genteel characters (as I was told) with force and sprightliness, but found that they wanted a stronger relief in the low comedy department than he could give. He therefore applied to Merry to "spice" his footmen and butlers with a few jokes. The latter readily undertook and completed the task.

On its representation, the comedy was received with an attention that augured its probable success, till one of the "spiced" characters came on, whose first joke put the house out of temper; a repetition of his offence drew forth a verbal notice, and a persistence in this conduct generated a whirlwind of hisses that blew away the unfortunate play to the infernal abodes; in other words, it was d——d, through Merry's

assistance. After this, Andrews and he never wrote in partnership.

Bate Dudley was a very quiet gentlemanly man, who always laughed heartily, but spoke seldom. He was built upon the scale of my friend George Parker; which is to say, he had a very clerical appearance. He looked big, benevolent, and thoughtful, and by a stranger might have been easily mistaken for a parson *incog*.

Dudley, as well as Topham and Woodfall, edited a paper. With the public abilities of these gentlemen, of course I have nothing to do; but Andrews, who was a friend of Topham, used to sneer at the former's qualifications, with the remark, "That if he dealt for twenty years in black and white, he'd never produce any thing that was *read*."

Dudley, hearing this, returned the compliment, by saying, that "Andrews would never make a noise in the world till he blew up his own mills."

The cleverest thing I can remember of Dudley was in connexion with his farce of "The Flitch of Bacon."

Lord Townshend, at the Club one night, was in want of a relish with his steak, and cried out, "I'd give a hundred pounds for a slice of ham—ay, or lump of bacon."—"Sir," replied Dudley, "you might have had a "flitch" the other day for half the money!"

Mr. Bearcroft, our recorder, was another quiet member, who always spoke pointedly, with occasional gleamings of wit. One of his peculiarities was a small admiration for Sheridan, who, he used to say, never got between Burke and Fox in a debate, but they crushed him to nothing, like a ship between icebergs. Being asked his opinion upon one of Sheridan's elegant appeals to the ministry, he said, "it put him in mind of an indifferent pudding: there was plenty of spice and sugar, and very few *reasons*."

One of the intelligent men of the Club was Woodfall, who, with little wit and less humour, possessed the faculty of clothing the most common-place subject with a degree of interest. He gave you so much matter in so few words, went so far below the surface of a

question, and expressed himself so clearly and forcibly, yet with such infinite modesty, that I often heard it remarked by visitors, he was a more agreeable companion for the night than many others, whose transcending brilliancies were succeeded by intervals of darkness. He was at this time at the height of his reputation as a reporter, which enabled him one night to say a pleasant thing.

A certain nobleman was dead, who had been noted for the feminine delicacy of his hands. The circumstance being mentioned at the Club, the members, with their usual waggery, began looking at their digital extremities; and Merry called for a show of hands, to decide the point of who had the smallest, when Woodfall remarked, "It should be given in my favour, Gentlemen; I have more credit for my *short-hand*, than any man in England."

Woodfall had a great originality in his expressions, and one evening shone upon us with considerable wit. We were speaking of an absent member of the Club, who was also a member of the House of Commons (one of the

“horizontal,” as Sheridan once called the gentlemen who stretch on the benches, in contradistinction to the “perpendiculars,” those who spoke). “Bob’s a good fellow,” said Andrews, “and a good singer, but a d—d bad speaker.”—“He’s a convenient speaker,” said Woodfall.—“What do you mean by convenient?”—“Why, when Pitt and Fox are on their legs, I am compelled to lay my ear close, and fear to lose a syllable; but when Mr. M. rises, I can take out a book, and understand two persons together.”

There was some fun and much significance in the following:—Sheridan came to the Club in great spirits, after one of his parliamentary flashes, which for a day or two used to dazzle the town, till a greater light broke forth and absorbed it. Seeing Woodfall, he approached him, rubbing his hands, and said, “Well, Woodfall, did not I do last night, eh?”—“The ‘Diary’ (Woodfall’s paper) says so,” replied the latter, with a smile.

Last, not least, amongst this “band of brothers” was Major Arabin, the best amateur comedian I ever saw, and the most extraor-



dinary mimic, after Tate Wilkinson. Garrick had seen him play in private some years previous, and was so impressed with his abilities as to offer him ten pounds a-week, if he would embrace the profession; but this he declined, on account of his military expectations; and these he blasted by the indulgence of his talents.

Barry, the tall hatter, was a frequent visitor to the Club. Having a cast in his eyes, he was enabled to take off John Wilkes with great felicity. Major Arabin was equally successful in assuming the peculiarities of the King; and when Barry was present, they would give a most ludicrous interview between the beloved monarch and his "political thorn," of which some "d——d good-natured friend" carrying an account to a high quarter, the Major expiated his joke in a temporary but fatal loss of his patronage.

Among our noble members, Lords Cavan and Say and Sele were of the quiet and intelligent order. Lord Townshend, in his undying hilarity and constitutional support of the dignities of Bacchus, would have out-bottled the heroes of

Londonderry, and Lord Galway exhibited no contemptible pretensions to the character of a wag. .

During one of my Irish itinerancies, I stopped at a village, where a marriage was celebrating between a man and woman, who were individually possessed of one leg and one eye.

The oddity of this circumstance induced a fit of poetical inspiration, and I composed several verses on the occasion, which I entitled “Peg Timber-toe, or the Irish Epithalamium.” This was ever after one of my choice comic songs, and I sang it on the evening of my first assuming the secretary’s chair at the Beef-steak. Lord Galway, among others, was so pleased with this effusion, that, on going home, he told his family that I had sung an old Irish air, of great sweetness, which enraptured the room. They naturally concluded it was from the stock of Carolin the harper; and their love of country filled them with a desire to hear it. The Beef-steak, like the Catch Club, was in the habit of giving “Ladies’ nights,” and one occurred in the ensuing week. On these occa-

sions it was customary for a certain number of songs to be sung by desire; and among those particularized by the ladies was Mr. Bernard's "old Irish air." I could not comprehend them at first; and as soon as the members learnt it was "Peg Timber-toe," a universal shout of laughter was the consequence. Certainly, no song possessed fewer of the attributes they had been led to give it, (pathos and tenderness particularly,) and, for the first time in my life, I felt completely divested of self-command. The ladies stared, the members roared, and it was only when Lord Galway (who, to increase my dilemma, was in the chair) rose up, to join his request to the ladies, that I suspected the cruel hoax he was imposing on the fair ones and myself.

On such occasions, I have always found human nature to have very little compassion, but rather a propensity to enjoy another's wretchedness, even at the expense of *décorum*. The members, who were not before acquainted with his Lordship's waggery, now perceived it, and raised a general murmur for the song, in the full conviction I would never dare to sing it,

fixing their eyes on me to feast on my embarrassment, whilst his Lordship remarked, "he wondered where was my gallantry, to need more than my first solicitation." In proportion to my hesitation, the merriment increased; but during the last few minutes I had recovered myself sufficiently to consider the most objectionable passages in the poetry, and to project alterations. The instant I perceived the song would be permissible, I rose, and, with an acknowledgment of the honour they did me, expressed my willingness to comply with their wishes.

My reader must imagine, for I have no power to describe, the transition which took place in the faces of my companions; they stared in terrible amazement. It was now my turn to triumph, and I relished the retaliation exceedingly. "Why, you are not going to sing it?" whispered one. "You are joking—what do you mean?" said another; and then at a distance, the members hemmed and coughed, and made signs, to all of which, however, I paid a stern disregard, and commenced my long-desired

song; the singing of which, whilst it drew forth a smile from all parties, I succeeded in adapting to offend none.

Lord Galway, after this, was one of my most zealous friends; at his house I occasionally met William Smith, that most perfect adapter of Lord Chesterfield to the English stage. Smith was not a gentleman by nature (as I have seen many); his ease and grace were the results of the most industrious observation. He read the best books, and mixed in the best society, and thus imparted to his expressions their unrivalled tinge of refinement. This, it will be said, redounded more to his credit, but this study generated one ill effect: in subduing himself to the quiet tone of high life, (with his considerable animal spirits,) there was an occasional effort perceptible, and a coldness and tameness at variance with the character, which strongly contrasted with the vivacity of Lewis. Lewis, on the other hand, was not the gentleman of the higher orders,—he was the Vapid and Parvé of the stage, but not the Lord Townley. Lewis had all the edge and fashion of a Damascene blade,

but Smith, the polish and temper: their respective errors could have been resolved into this ;—the one restrained his animal spirits too much; the other would not restrain them at all. Stepping between both, and superior to either, Garrick was the only man I ever saw who moved, looked, and spoke like a gentleman from impulse. Sheridan's opinion of Smith, however, awarded him a higher station than either of these competitors; and he eulogized Smith's acting with his usual conciseness, in reply to a person who asked him what he thought of his *Mirabel*—"Ad-mirable."

During this winter, I went to Drury Lane, to see Kemble and Mrs. Siddons in "*The Gamester*." Standing up in the boxes between the acts, I observed a tall, well-dressed man in the pit bow to me; but at the distance was unable to recognise him. The next morning, a rap came to my door, and a Mr. Davis, who supplied my wife with stage-dresses, made his appearance, as the above unknown, to request the favour of my advice upon a strange occurrence of the past evening.

In the squeeze to get into the pit, he lost his watch ; and, on taking his seat, found himself next a friend to whom he related his misfortune. His friend informed him that the man who sat before him was a pickpocket ; and he had better whisper the son of Mercury softly, that he suspected him of the robbery, and would give him into the hands of an officer. Mr. Davis did so ; and as the curtain was about to rise, the gentleman addressed reached his hand behind him with a watch, which Mr. Davis very eagerly grasped, and slipped into his fob without inspecting.

On quitting the Theatre, he drew forth his recovered property, to perceive if it had sustained any damage, and to his surprise discovered that he had not got his own watch, but one of about five times its value. This good fortune disquieted his mind, and having observed me in the Theatre, he thought he would make me a repository of the facts.

I advised him to read all the day's papers, to ascertain if the watch was not advertised ; and if not, to publish the whole affair on the morrow,

as the owner would no doubt be glad to redeem so valuable a property, at double the purchase of the other. This, Mr. Davis did, but no applicant appearing, he kept the watch, and was thus in pocket by his loss.

Owing to various circumstances this season, my line of business was extended much more than I had engaged for or wished.

Quick was beginning to play the old men, and threw upon my shoulders his young ones ; and Edwin, then at the height of his popularity, not being forthcoming more than one evening out of three (a singular mode of repaying public favour), Rider, on such occasions, refused to be his substitute (it was in his article, not to be compelled to play when his name was not announced), and I was the only one in the house who could prevent the change of entertainment. As Edwin was then the ruling favourite of London, such a duty was far from being desirable ; and with me particularly, who had established my reputation in the gentlemen, and not the vulgarians, of the drama.

Lewis was always obliged to apologize for



Edwin in person (an office which he grumbled at as much as I did in playing for him), and one evening, going forward with the usual formula, that it was with the greatest regret he had to inform the house Mr. Edwin was prevented from appearing that evening, in consequence of sudden indisposition.—“ Gradual indisposition, you mean, Mr. Lewis,” said a person in the pit; “ for I saw him ten minutes ago, getting drunk under the Piazzas.”

Lewis received this rebuke for his official tergiversation with becoming complacency ; and observed, that the Piazzas should be instantly searched ; but “ that Mrs. Edwin had made her husband ill, not himself.” The Piazzas were accordingly inspected, with every adjacent house of celebrity ; but no Edwin appearing, I was compelled to give up the society of half a dozen fellows from the “ Beef-steak,” put on a red wig, and play “ Darby” in “ The Poor Soldier.”

Admiral Afflick, whom I had known both at Ipswich and Plymouth, renewed my acquaintance in London, and took me with him to the

anniversary dinner of the "Marine Society," at the "Crown and Anchor;" an institution which had for its object the education of sailors' children to the avocation of their sires—the forming of incipient crews for the floating bulwarks of Old England. At that stormy period, this idea had an extra degree of popularity.

The company that assembled was both numerous and respectable; and on the cloth's removal, after some particulars had been read, in regard to the state and system of the society, we were gratified with the appearance of the infant seamen, who marched in in blue jackets and white trowsers, two by two, and went round the table, singing the national air of "Rule Britannia." The effect was beautiful, it was more—it was elevating; it made every man, cockney, or actor, feel another Benbow or Blake sitting on his deck, and surrounded by his unconquerable companions;—and as the plate was very properly sent round the instant after, I would have defied the most jacobinical rascal that ever breathed to have refused his guinea.

As I did not recognise any faces in the com-

pany, I was in hopes to have sat snug for the evening, but some one presently espied me, and requested a song. When my name was once announced, my acquaintance extended, and the singing of the song became imperative.

Collins's ditty of "Good Queen Bess" was then in great vogue; and being the first that came to mind, I commenced it; but on coming to the line,

"And bring you down a Spaniard as easy as a crow, sir,"

a loud hiss ran round the table, which I could not account for; till a gentleman next me whispered, that the "Spanish Ambassador" sat on the right-hand of the chair. I was a little disconcerted by this unpleasant coincidence, and as the hissing continued, broke off at the end of the verse; but some sensible person explaining the circumstance properly, the noble individual concerned rose up immediately, and said, "*Encore*." This good-humoured interference allayed the irritation of my hearers, and my embarrassment. "Bernard," whispered the Admiral, "now

the geese are quiet, the swan can proceed.” In justice to his memory, I must add, that the Admiral did not commit these things very often.

During this period, I went very frequently to the “Anacreontic,” the first musical meeting of the metropolis; where, with Bannister and others, I was an honorary member.

Not having the instrumental performances of the “Catch Club,” the above was in this respect its inferior; but I must admit that its singing, whether private or professional, placed it upon a par.

Tom Hewardine was the principal song-writer to the Club,—a man of little wit, but wonderful humour. In that species of composition called “Anacreontics,” which in those days were devoted more to the praise of Bacchus than Venus, Stevens, Morris, and Hewardine were the three cleverest writers: their styles and talents were very different. Stevens wrote with wit, and a truly classical grace; Morris, with wit and grace, but at times a confounded contamination of indelicacy; Hewardine, with neither wit nor

grace, but a rich and potent humour that supplied the place of both.

Hewardine was by no means an original talker,—his talent lay rather in the delivery than the invention of a thing ; and as it was a saving of trouble, he preferred resuscitating jokes of the previous century, points which had been dead and buried with the past generation, to producing, in the manner of Merry, his own family. He had a most extensive acquaintance with the offspring of that celebrated philosopher and actor Joseph Miller, and possessed to an eminent degree the faculty of stealing and giving them new dresses and habitations, and calling them his own. His conscience, it appeared, had no “ compunctious visitings” for this species of “ literary kidnapping,” but was tenderly alive to any other man’s sinning in the same way ; whilst he was so well acquainted with the family, from the number of faces he had disfigured, that he was able to detect an attempt on the instant.

Bate Dudley one evening had been telling a story to the Club, which he purported to be

entirely new, and which caused a good deal of laughter. Hewardine then observed, that the anecdote related by Mr. Dudley put him in mind of another nearly as facetious. He then repeated some venerable affair, which, whatever its point, bore no more resemblance to Dudley's, than a white egg to a black hen. When it was concluded, Dudley turned to Hewardine with a stare of surprise, and observed, "That was a very humorous circumstance; but I can't see how my anecdote could remind you of it?"—"No!" said Tom. "Why, I'll tell you,—your story is at the top of the leaf, page 17, Miller's old edition, and mine follows at the bottom!"

Among the *débuts* of this season was that of Charles Incledon, who had been singing several summers at Vauxhall. Mr. Harris had precisely the same indifference to his merits as Mr. Palmer, and tried him with the same slight expectation of his success; the world knows the result—it was the greatest dramatic triumph of my observation. Incledon soon became not a greater attraction at the Theatre than acquisition

to the Clubs, where the sentiments of his ballads were always relished from the sweetness of their sounds.

Covent Garden closed with its usual *éclat*, and I procured from the Green-room Quick and Holman's assistance to ensure Plymouth for the next summer ; a little "star"-light. Over this period I pass, from the truly "stage business" character of its events: there was but one that I can hope for a smile in relating.

One of my best and most active friends in Plymouth was Benjamin Haydon the printer. He was kind enough, during the winter, to be my agent, communicating with me regularly respecting the Theatre, and meeting Wolf and Jefferson upon all local business.

His son, the present artist of celebrity, was then a spirited, intelligent, little fellow about ten years of age, who used to listen to my songs and laugh heartily at my jokes, whenever I dined at his father's. One evening I was playing Sharp in "The Lying Valet," when he and my friend Benjamin were in the stage-box; and on my repeating the words, "I had had

nothing to eat since last Monday was a fortnight!" little Haydon exclaimed, in a tone audible to the whole house, "What a wopper! Why, you dined at my father's house this afternoon!"

It was on this occasion, I believe, Mr. B. R. Haydon first attracted the notice of the public.



## CHAPTER VI.

1789-90.—London.—The "Era of Clubs."—The Comedians' Club.—Kelly, Dignum, and Sedgwick, the vocal triumvirate.—Sheridan's comments on the two latter, and reply to John Palmer.—Notes of a Club conversation, the "Beef-steak."—Mr. Darley and his song.—Billy Upton, Manager of Astley's Literary Department: his Songs, and Jack Johnson.—Macklin's return to the Stage.—Frank Aiken's age.—Billy Bates' reply.—Colman and Harris.—Philip Lewis, the "Crying Philosopher;" his remark to Webb; and interruption to Anthony Pasquin; his impromptu on Garrick.—Rider and Rock.—A "Knife" with a point.—Plymouth.—The three "Ubiquitarians."—Captain Bell and Sir John Jervis.—Sir John's favourite Boatswain.—The Sailor afloat; an example of coolness; his devotion to the service.

THE convivial spirit of England was certainly never at a greater height than in the times of which I am writing: they might have been called the "Era of Clubs." Whatever may be the talents of the present generation to support

such institutions, it is evident that the disposition to set them on foot pervaded more largely its predecessor. And this was entirely disconnected with any political motives; the safety of the country was not at that period threatened. It was the spirit of harmony and fellowship which brought men together of all kinds and classes to cement, once a week, the pleasurable "chains of the heart."

The comedians being among the most sociable of his Majesty's subjects, (out of the theatre,) partook of the general sympathy, and instituted, at the commencement of this winter, 1789-90, their Club, which they entitled "The Strangers at Home;" an appellation that some thought would have been more appropriate for a meeting of travellers.

Charles Bannister, Edwin, Suett, Jack Johnson, Blanchard, Incledon, Kelly, Dignum, and Sedgwick, (that perpetual triumvirate,) and myself, were among the founders.

O'Keeffe was our poet, and Dr. Kennedy our physician, who, with all his skill and good-nature, had he been compelled to have cured

some of the members' "indispositions," would have had his time engrossed and his head puzzled.

This Club was held at the Garrick's Head, in Bow Street, and had always an overflow of visitors; for, though it attempted no rivalry with the "Beef-steak" and "Anacreontic," in their characteristic distinctions, no meeting was pervaded by a more genuine spirit of humour and harmony.

In one respect, it was peculiar: it had two distinct sets of glee-singers; Incledon, Johnson, and Bannister—Kelly, Dignum, and Sedgwick. As they seldom grappled on the same ground, it was difficult to test their superiority; but it struck me that the first had the best voices, and the latter the most science. From continually going into company together, the latter were most noted. Kelly was at all times a very gentlemanly fellow and a pleasant companion. Sedgwick was quiet and inoffensive, but his voice was his solitary attraction. Sheridan used to say, with his usual good-nature, that "he was like a Christmas spectacle,—he had more sound

than sense." Dignum was equally quiet and amiable, but with rather more vanity than Sedgwick. He was desirous of a credit for his intellect, and that people should attribute his frequent fits of vacuity to profound mental abstraction. He was thus in the habit, in the Green-room, and at the table occasionally, of placing his finger to his forehead, in the manner of Lawrence Sterne, as represented in his portrait, and pretending to be unconscious of what was passing around him. Among the actors, this demure hoax succeeded, but not with the gentleman who wrote "The School for Scandal." It was indeed one of Sheridan's pastimes to analyze his company, and compare them with the beings it was their business to imitate. Some one observing Dignum in his usual meditative posture, remarked it to the manager:—"Look at Dignum! he's thinking again!"—"No!" said Sheridan; "he thinks he thinks!"

One of the most inexplicable beings of Drury Lane Green-room was John Palmer: his general fluency upon conversational topics, and the

modest insinuation of his opinions, led many to place his mental attainments upon a par with Kemble's, "a man who never talked but on the stage;" whilst his powers of persuasion, in defeating that tiger of human life — a creditor, have descended to the present day as proverbial. Sheridan however solved him, with every other dramatic problem of the day.

On Palmer's return to Drury Lane, after the failure of his speculation at the Royalty Theatre, the first evening he entered the Green-room, he perceived the manager near the fire, and approached him with his usual look and air, and the most fervent declarations of regret that any differences should have arisen between them. "Come, come, John," said Sheridan, cutting him short, "I wrote Joseph Surface, remember!"

In approbation of my services, during the first season of my secretaryship to the "Beef-steak," the Club was pleased to have my portrait painted by Marshall, (that which faces this work,) and hung up in the room. My Royal patron, the Prince, on observing it, re-

marked, that he had seen many better paintings, but never a greater likeness.

We commenced and continued our meetings as usual. This is saying every thing. It is one of my greatest regrets, that, considering the many evenings I passed at the Beef-steak, in the converged brilliancy of all the lights then shining, neither memory nor journals can enable me to transfer to these pages the sources of my gratification,—that that is a dream to me now, which was then one of the springs of my existence. I was too much engrossed with enjoyment at the time, to wish, or even conjecture, the possibility of imparting my sensations to others who were to follow me; nor did I ever but upon one occasion attempt to take notes of what was passing, though, in my office as Secretary, such a design was at all times permissible.

Those notes however, loose and unconnected as they are, may prove acceptable to my reader; since, though affording no specimen of the general cleverness of the conversation, they illustrate in some measure the different styles of the members.

*Topham.* “Fox was very powerful last night.”

*Woodfall.* “His arguments were unusually clear, and well connected.”

*Sheridan.* “Yes; his tongue’s like a time-glass; the longer it runs, the clearer it gets.”

*Andrews.* “Then, he’s not like a cask of Madeira.”

*Sheridan.* “No, or he’d have died long ago by tapping.”

*Merry.* “And yet he’s been tapp’d pretty often.”

*Suett.* “Talking of tapping, Gentlemen,—I had an aunt (Heaven rest her bones!) afflicted with the dropsy, who was tapped seventy-five times in one week.”

A general laugh.

*Capt. M.* (An M.P.) “Suett, was your father an actor?”

*Suett.* “No; he was a tailor.”

*Merry.* “Then he did more for his customers than the Captain will for the Constitution—he mended their breaches.”

*Suett.* “To one thing, Gentlemen, may I crave your attention? I know who *was* my father.”

*Sheridan.* “A wise child!”

*Andrews.* “And a true believer.”

*Bearcroft.* “We must take his word; for we can’t produce evidence to the contrary.”

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*Andrews.* “Kemble played Hamlet with great effect on Monday.”

*Topham.* “Once or twice, I thought he forgot himself.”

*Sheridan.* “You mistake; he forgot his audience.”

*Andrews.* “He never forgets *you*, Sheridan.”

*Sheridan.* “Not on a Saturday.”

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*Somebody.* “Can’t we have a glee? Here’s Dignum and Sedgwick, but not Kelly.”

*Captain Baker.* “I like Kelly; he’s a sociable, manly fellow.”

*Andrews.* “I question his manhood; he’s inclined to Crouch.”

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*Somebody.* "What could have induced —— to blow his brains out?"

*Sheridan.* "A desire to convict the world, who said he never had any."

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*Topham.* "Merry, you heard of B——'s elopement with C——, and that her father overtook them?"

*Merry.* "Yes; Tom ran after a plum, and the father after a pair."

*Woodfall.* "These Gretna Green marriages are decidedly imprudent."

*Merry.* "They are on the border."

In my visits to the "Anacreontic," I became acquainted with a Mr. Darley, a gentleman in the City, possessed of a very strong and melodious voice. All the non-professionals were in the habit of getting songs written for them, or writing them themselves, to ensure a peculiar ground to each. Mr. Darley was a good singer and a clever calculator, but no poet. Believing that I was one, he asked me to put him on a level with his companions. "The Neglected

Tar" had been thrown aside some time, and I wrote "The Neglected Female," to the same tune. He was much pleased with it, and so was the Club; it was adapted to their meridian, being spiced with appeals to the honour and generosity of the one sex, with panegyrics on the virtue and loveliness of the other. Moreover, it had a chorus; and, in Mr. Darley's opinion, that was as necessary an appendage to a song in a club-room as a tail to a kite.

The first night he sung it, I went with him, and the first verse he got through with some effect; but, on coming to the chorus, which ran thus—

"Then guard and guide the British fair;  
'Tis your exalted duty:  
May vengeance ne'er the villain spare,  
Who scorns the chains of Beauty!"—

he, with stentorian lungs, converted the two V's into W's, and a most roof-rending shout was the consequence. On sitting down, he said to me with a very grave face, "My friend John, do you know what they laughed at?" A fear of offending him made me refrain

an answer ; but he was not to be satisfied without one. I then replied, " Why, do you know, in the chorus, you said, willin and wengence."—" And what do you say ?"—" Villain and vengeance."—" Well, and I say willin and wengence too."

My general acquaintance with the Clubs of the metropolis, and tolerable reputation as a club-singer, led at length to an important consequence—nothing less than an intimacy with Billy Upton, of rhyme-writing memory, whose long attachment to the Muses had at length procured him the honour of wearing *their livery*—" a coat out at elbows."

Upton derived his resources chiefly from old Astley, to whom he was poet and interlude writer : indeed, he managed the entire literary department ; for he concocted the puffs, and invented the playbills. These latter sciences, I believe it has been generally admitted, were never so thoroughly investigated and established as by the genius of Upton. Whatever is valuable or beautiful in the present systems, it must be attributed to him,—and this is no small

praise, considering the high powers of judgment and fancy they call into play.

Upton's prose was undoubtedly pure poetry; unluckily, the very converse of this subsisted also: his poetry was pure prose. His songs were certain sentimental inventions, composed of lines that, like Paddy's family, had the same number of feet, and carried rhymes at their tails, which jingled as merrily as the bells of a fly-waggon.

Astley's employments not affording Upton subsistence throughout the year, he was compelled to increase his resources by song-writing. His practice was to make and fit some literary texture to the back of some popular tune, then obtain the aid of some popular singer, to introduce to the public their old acquaintance in its new habiliment, and then prevail on the publisher to give him a couple of guineas for his product. These songs were generally of three kinds—patriotic, bacchanalian, and amatory. The "patriotic" usually indulged in the mistake of supposing every hearer to be another Hampden, and England to be the "gem of the sea." The "bacchanalian" turned mostly upon the

point of that grey-headed gentleman, Care, being drowned in a red goblet; and the "amatory" displayed considerable botanical research upon the subject of flowers. Nevertheless, Upton was so inoffensive, industrious, needy, and civil, that every singer was his friend, and not even Jack Johnson had the heart to refuse him.

There was a musical meeting about to be established in the City, of which Upton wished to become Poet Laureate; and hearing that Johnson was a member, he importuned the latter to sing one of his songs on the opening night, by way of recommendation to his claim. Johnson consented, and Upton sent him what he termed a "Pastoral Cantata," which he desired Johnson to put a tune to, as it was entirely original. This pastoral, however, happened to be so emblematic of the mountainous part of Arcadia, so up hill and down dale in its construction, so craggy and uneven, (written, no doubt, with a view of electrifying Jack,) that the music must have had the skill of a Welsh goat to have gone over it. Johnson perused the composition several times; but at

length, completely bothered by its irregularities, returned it, saying, "Billy, my darling, you have twisted these words out of shape finely; but if you can't twist a tune into shape with them, I'd defy Matthew Locke, or John Locke, to do it for you!"

It was this season, I believe, that the veteran Macklin attempted his last return to the Stage, with the weight of a century on his shoulders. The result is well known. Whilst his heart glowed with all its early fires, his memory failed him, and he found that even the language of Shakespeare was not sacred to that great robber—Time.

Walking about the stage during rehearsal, he kept flapping rather ostentatiously his original part of Shylock, which was covered with a bill of his first performance of that character in Ireland.

The Lady who played Nerissa, was at that time courted by Frank Aiken, who, by means of a good wig, sound teeth, and a slim figure, contrived to sink ten years of his age without suspicion. On Macklin's bill, Frank's

name appeared for Bassanio; and Mrs. W., among other ladies, pressing round Macklin, to read his precious vestige of antiquity, naturally fixed her eye on her lover's letters; then glancing at the date of the bill, (some five-and-thirty years back,) exclaimed with a mixture of surprise and disbelief—"Mr. Aiken!—Mr. Macklin, February the 8th, 1745,—not Mr. Francis Aiken?" Macklin comprehended her: glaring with his great eyes, he gave a savagely exulting chuckle, and replied, "Yes, Marm, that's Frank!"

My reader may remember, in the first chapter of this volume, the mention of a certain theatrical peripatetic, Billy Bates by denomination.

When Macklin played Macbeth at Drury Lane (the occasion which gave rise to the well-known trial), Bates had given up his legitimate propensity, and became stationary on the boards of the Royal house. This ascension in circumstances was also a criterion of his powers. He played the characters requiring the most genius to make effective, those that the author had done nothing for, together with the villains of the

executive department, and some of the heroes who “looked more than they spoke.” But lacking good things to say on the stage, Bates enjoyed no trivial reputation for those he said off.

Macklin, in his usual *ursa major* manner, was going round to the actors to stare them full in the face, and then recollect their names.—“Oh, oh, —you—you are—Mr. Holland, eh?—Macduff, eh?—and you—you are—Mr. Palmer—Banquo, Banquo! and, and—and you are the King! and you are Lennox! and, and—and (coming to Bates) you—you are the first murderer, eh?”—“No, Sir,” said Bates promptly, “you are?”

Colman the elder, and Harris, had a quarrel at Covent Garden one day, when Bates was standing by. Colman, disdaining to vituperate, walked out of the theatre; and Harris, bouncing about the stage, exclaimed, “A little impudent rascal! I’d a good mind to double him up, and put him in my pocket.”—“Then,” observed Bates, “you’d have had more in your pocket than your head, a good deal.”

Among my eccentric acquaintance at this period was old Philip Lewis (uncle to the comedian),



who had obtained from his professional brethren the title of "The Crying Philosopher." He was continually whimpering over the past and the present; and, though his nephew sheltered and allowed him a comfortable income, looking forward to conclude his days within the walls of a workhouse. He considered, nay, he called theatrical gentlemen collectively, rogues and impostors, and himself the most unfortunate and ill-used being in the kingdom of England. It involves no paradox to affirm, that Philip Lewis took a pleasure in being miserable; and the only charitable mode of accounting for a humour which was as ridiculous as ungrateful, (for he murmured at even the good he had received from its not coming in a greater proportion,) was the referring it to a constitutional defect.

Philip had been an actor of considerable eminence in his day at Dublin and Edinburgh; and the chief source of his misery was to remember how many men who were then his inferiors were now metropolitan favourites. He considered his own age (which was seventy-five) just as little

as their talent. This peculiarity shut him out from the Green-rooms, and indeed closed the doors of most of his acquaintance.

Mr. and Mrs. Webb of Covent Garden had a little cottage somewhere on the banks of the Thames, and Philip, being one of their early Provincial associates, was invited to spend a Sunday with them.

Philip had been unusually good-tempered throughout the day, expressing his satisfaction at the snugness and convenience of the house, the pleasantness of its situation, &c.; and Webb, to wind up his comforts, produced after dinner a bottle of excellent Madeira, filled his glass, and asked his opinion of it. Philip put it to his lips, smacked them, looked at Webb for an instant, and then, instead of making a reply, burst into one of his snivelling fits, which distressed his worthy host as much as it perplexed him.

“My dear Philip,” said he, “what can be the cause of this affliction?” — “The cause?” whimpered Lewis; “why, to think, Dicky, that such a blockhead as you should have your

country-house, and be able to drink this Madeira, when I am forced to live in an attic, and thank my nephew for scraps."

Those who remember the excellent acting of Mrs Webb cannot forget with what sufficiency her voice used to fill the dome of Covent Garden; and on this occasion she beat such a tattoo on the drums of Philip's ears, that the unthankful cynic was glad to snatch his hat and fly from the retributive infliction.

But his nephew, who could not close the door on him, was subjected to the severest trials.

Philip always dined with the family, excepting Lewis had a party; he was then restricted to his room, and had his dinner sent up to him, from the fear that, if he sat at table, he would insult some of the company. Philip considered this a greater piece of brutality than was to be found in the inhuman records of Hottentot history. He stigmatized his nephew publicly for his unworthy pride; and on one of these occasions brooded on his ill-treatment, till the gall secreted sufficiently to overflow his heart and send him down-stairs. He reached the drawing-room

door soon after the cloth had been removed, and at the moment that one of Lewis's literary parasites, Anthony Pasquin, under the influence of Lewis's Madeira, was beginning to flatter him in that direct manner which, Glenalvon says, "seldom disgusts."

"One thing, Lewis, that I esteem you more for, than your talents (said the ingenuous and fanciful author), is your attention to your uncle; and you may rely on it, it goes a good way with the public in general, to know that you cherish and support his declining years,—that you shelter him from the storms of fortune and the blights of care,—from the winter of the world's forgetfulness, the cold hearts, and closed hands—"—"It's a d——d lie, Sir," exclaimed Philip, thrusting open the door with uncontainable vexation; "he doesn't even allow me to sit at his table!"

The scene that ensued must be imagined. There were times, however, when wine could calm Philip's troubles as oil is said to do the ocean's,—when it could lock up his consciousness of the present, and open to only what was rare and beautiful in the past. He was the

only man besides Macklin, of my acquaintance, who remembered the *début* of Garrick; and it was on one of the above occasions, when sitting at my table with Charles Bannister and Merry, he uttered an impromptu I have since heard attributed to others:

“ I saw him rising in the East, in all his energetic glows :  
I saw him sinking in the West, in greater splendour than  
he rose.”

The Benefits at Covent Garden this season were numerous and well supported. Miss Brunton took “The Trip to Scarborough,” to give her sister an opening in Miss Hoyden.

Rider on this occasion, to strengthen the cast, consented to perform “Sir Tunbelly.” His comparative failure in London had soured his temper, without convincing his judgment. He believed in the soundness of Dublin criticism, and the existing vigour of his powers; he was rather consequential, therefore, whenever he played an inferior part to oblige, being secured from such an indignity in the regular business by his article.

Sir Tunbelly happens to be (even in the adap-

tation of Sheridan) "one of the worst elderly gentlemen on the stage,"—that is, in a mental not a moral respect ; in the theatrical vocabulary, wit and goodness are synonymous.

Rider knew of old the stage villainy of this character, and walked about during rehearsal taking snuff and cursing Sir Tunbelly, as though he had been a Saracen. "Here," said he to Rock, his countryman,—“here’s a part to put a leading comedian into ! Why, Sir, there’s not the shadow, not the ghost of a good line in it.”—“True enough, my darling,” replied Rock, “the author hasn’t bothered his head about you ; but sure, you can put in a good thing for yourself !”—“In what place ?” said Rider : “I see none.”—“Oh yes, love your soul !—listen : when you say to me (Rock played the priest), ‘Then, you have really married this young couple?’ and I say ‘I have ;’ you must answer, (and by the powers ! the author might have said it himself,) ‘Well then, d—n me if ever you stick knife in pudding of mine again !’”—“Hum !” said Rider ; “that might produce a laugh, sure enough ;—thank ye, Rock :” and he deliberately

noted down this gratuitous good thing in the margin of his part. But the shade of Vanbrugh most likely had overheard this wicked conspiracy of the Irishmen to enrol among his legitimate witticisms this spurious offspring, and determined to defeat the iniquitous attempt, yet nevertheless, in doing so, produced the desired result.

At night, when they came to the situation, Rider, who had been working himself to make his solitary hit, bawled out with the utmost power of his lungs, "Then, d—— me if ever you stick pudding into knife of mine again!" This blunder elicited an universal shout of laughter, which was renewed and prolonged till the actors were infected, and the scene stood still; during which, Rider, who (to enhance the joke) was ignorant of the true cause, turned to me (pinioned beside him as Lord Foppington), and observed, "Well, John, my knife had a point to it?"

On quitting the stage he was in perfect good humour, but on explaining to him his mistake, he soured directly; he did not believe a word that we said; called it pitiful envy at his success; and if the whole audience had come forward

with their united testimony, I think he would have persisted in believing that it was the line they laughed at, and not its perversion.

My Benefit sent me in spirits to Plymouth, whither I carried a few new faces to meet my old friends.

Amongst my nautical acquaintance, (with whom I chiefly passed my convivial evenings,) I this summer numbered Captain Hobbes of the *Marines*.

Sailors, like soldiers and actors, are *itine-rants*; they are the three great professors and inculcators of the "ubiquitarian" system, and afford daily demonstrations of the truth of that position, with which Corporal Trim enlightened the whimpering servant-maids—"Man is here to-day, and gone to-morrow." But, my reader will say, What has Corporal Trim to do with Captain Hobbes?

At this gentleman's table I was introduced to General Collins and Captain Bell,\* and among

\* The same that was afterwards lost in the "*Centaur*," when Captain Inglefield and the crew escaped in the long-boat, and made good their return to England.



a variety of anecdotes that were circulated after dinner, the latter favoured us with some amusing notices of Sir John Jervis.

He and Sir John sailed in the "Foudroyant," that celebrated ship which was built by the French to be converted into one of the most formidable defenders of British dominion. One day, during a brisk gale, Sir John and the Captain were playing "picquet" in the aft-cabin, when the sea struck the ship with such violence as to carry away the larboard-quarter-gallery, leaving an aperture behind, apparently large enough to admit the next wave entire. The shock nearly threw them from their seats: when righted, Sir John eyed the mischief with unconcern, threw his legs upon a chair to keep them out of the wet, and, turning round, proceeded with his game as though nothing had happened. "Tierce to your Queen, Captain." The Captain, though accustomed to dangers, looked upon this with some uneasiness; but it would have been a species of insubordination for him to have expressed fear when his Commander did not. As the game proceeded, the

cabin floor swam with water, and, at its conclusion, Sir John threw down his cards with a smile, saying, "You don't play to-day with your usual 'good fortune,' Bell, or your usual judgment." He then called the sentry at the door, and bade him pass the word for the carpenter.

Sir John had a favourite boatswain, one of those broad-backed, limber-legged, leather-skinned lovers of pigtail and shag, whose sayings and doings have contributed to raise the character of English seamen to the popularity it enjoys on the stage and with the world. This Jack's "jawing-tacks" slipped so easily, that he was always employed on the "press-gang" expeditions, being able to seduce more men into the "sarvice," than others to compel.

One of the unfortunates that fell into his toils was a Methodistical tailor, "who," to use Merry's joke, "not being able to get his bread, was willing to live upon water." The first morning he was afloat, an enemy hove in sight, and all hands were piped; all hands appeared but the particular individual who is supposed

by some to constitute a connecting link between the two sexes. Jack instantly sprang down the fore-castle, and found the tailor in his berth, with no intention of rising. "Why, you swab!" exclaimed Jack, "what do you do there?" — "Thinking of my soul!" murmured he. "Your soul! — I tell 'e what, Jerry Thimble, if you don't bouse up and rig away, afore we're called to quarters, I'll clap my knee upon your breast-bone, and bark at your soul like a house-dog!"

The engagement that ensued proved to be both long and sanguinary; during which, the boatswain was very active in doing his own duty and every body's else. He had been carrying a wounded officer below, and running up the cabin-stairs, plunged his head into the stomach of Sir John, who, covered with smoke and perspiration, his face smutted, and his lace trimmings tarnished, was running down. The collision nearly carried the latter to the deck, who, gasping for breath, roared out, "You rascal! what do you mean by that?" The boatswain's eye was riveted by his commander's

whimsical appearance, and bursting into a loud laugh, he replied, "I beg your Honour's pardon, but your Honour looks for all the world like a chimney-sweep on May-day !"

Sir John said that, considering the enemy's fire was then strewing dead bodies about them, this was the greatest specimen of coolness he had ever witnessed.

The following was equally illustrative. Sir John's crew had been paid off at Plymouth, and the ship put in dock ; but immediately after, he received an order from the Admiralty to refit for sea. Walking one day in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, he encountered Jack with a lass under his arm, and a large dog running before him with a watch round his neck. Jack saluted his Commander, and made Poll and the dog do the same. Sir John then asked him if he would go to sea with him again, stating the orders he had received. Jack inquired the period Sir John was given to refit. "Only a fortnight," was the answer. "That's unfortunate," said Jack, "for I've been kalkylating, your Honour, that with Poll, and the dog, and the watch, my

money will jist last me a month ; howsomever, I can do this eer, your honour — (aside) — I can keep two marms, two dogs, and two watches ; and then I shall have unloaded the shiners in a fortnight, sure enough !”

This was “devotion to his Majesty’s service,” with a vengeance.

## CHAPTER VII.

1790-1.—London.—Holman on Cooke.—The Science of Story-telling.—Theatrical Story-tellers.—Parker; Wilkinson; Tommy Hull; Dodd and Pilon; Suett; Macklin; and Dr. Wolcot.—Aiken and Kemble's Duel.—A cool Reproof.—Mr. Bradelle.—Gentleman Humphreys and the Blacksmith.—Lord Barrymore and the "Blue-bottle Club;" or, the "Humbugs."—Incedon's Humbug.—The Hibernians.—Anthony Pasquin, his Lordship's favourite and secretary.—Anecdote of a gentlemanly Dog.—Lord B.'s eccentricity and reply.—"Going his rounds."—A London Blood's ramble.—The "Two o'Clock Club."—The Finish.—Robin Hood.—Mr. Bowden and his "nose."—Dublin scepticism; innocent revenge.—Mrs. Abington and her "teeth;" a gallant controversy; her juvenility.—Edwin's death.—Retirement from Covent Garden.

ON returning to town, one of the first persons I encountered was George Holman, who had been to Manchester. I inquired the talents of the company, and he answered, "There was one clever man amongst them, a Mr.

Cooke, a good country actor, John,—but he'd never do in London!" This was precisely Garrick's opinion of Henderson.

It was at the "Beef-steak," this winter, I first saw Dr. Wolcot, and had the gratification of hearing how he could tell a story. It is rather gratuitous for me to inform my reader, that the telling of a story has often constituted the worth of it; he must be aware how frequently the palest ground has received a brilliant colouring; the merest "Master Slender" of an outline has been embodied with the jovial sufficiency of Sir John Falstaff. As, on the other hand, the sharpest blade of wit has been often blunted in its manner of handling, and the most effervescent of jokes become vapid in the mode of uncorking and pouring out.

It is a different thing to tell a story, and an anecdote. The latter depends but upon one point, and, being short, may be cleverly delivered by a common-place talker. The former is made up of a number of points, each of which requires to be so placed and connected, that the whole may form a regular gradation to

the climax. Thus, as its effect depends on certain rules, story-telling ought to be numbered among the elegant sciences, in which practice alone can give a man proficiency. But a clever story-teller must nevertheless possess certain natural qualifications: he must have a good fund of humour, if not wit, with some powers of mimicry, to give vitality to his dialogues.

Among the theatrical story-tellers of my experience, George Parker must be mentioned as the first, both in point of time and of excellence; but he had an advantage in his collection of stories, which were altogether original; any one of them was a specific for the spleen, that might have put to the blush half the grave advice of the "*Materia Medica*."

Next was Wilkinson: he was a better mimic than Parker; but he made too many digressions; and by the time he had unravelled his joke, he would sometimes have forgot what it pertained to.

Then there was Hewardine; whose practice I have already noticed, of drawing all his truth from the well of Joseph Miller. The humour



of these relations used to consist in the grave impudence of his referring their circumstances to himself; in his avowing he had actually seen, or performed every thing he told, though all such were among the most cherished recollections of his companions' childhood.

Tommy Hull (the well-known apologist of Covent Garden) was very fond of story-telling, but he was an intolerable drone. He would divide the most insignificant circumstance into as many heads as a methodist sermon,—and pause long enough between each, for a servant to have run out and called a coach. Hull's age and amiableness always procured him attention, but this led him to presume. One evening at the "Strangers at Home," he was dozing, as usual, over one of his wearisome narratives, (one of our established wet blankets,) which the Club always applauded at the *conclusion*; when Mer-ry turned to Charles Bannister, and said, "Does Hull think he's now telling a story?"—"No," replied Charles,—“making an apology.”

Dodd and Pilon were terrible rambles:—the first would begin to give an account of an elope-

ment, at about nine in the evening, and by the time the clock struck twelve, he had got the happy couple as far as the first stage;—Pilon would set out with a circumstance that occurred in Covent Garden, and before he concluded, would have passed through all the principal towns in the three kingdoms.

Suett used to follow in the wake of Hewar-dine. He would tumble on some vestige in antiquity, which, with alterations and additions, he was enabled to study and deliver like a part. He had the modesty, certainly, not to relate it of himself,—but the bronze at all times to affirm its modern occurrence. When the imposition was discovered, (generally by two-thirds of the room,) he would stare around him with the most profound look of surprise, murmur his Puck note, “Oh la !” and exclaim, “I thought it was new !”

Macklin was a drawler in the superlative sense; John Kemble tortured words; Garrick, ideas; but Macklin, both; and the worst of it was, that however he lulled you, he would not suffer you to sleep; you were not permitted to

hear him and think of any thing else. He grasped you by the arm or the button whilst he was talking, and then lowered his shaggy brows, and fixed his large eyes on you, like a tiger peeping out of a bush.

Parsons could tell a story with some tact; but no man perhaps was more amusing than Bensley, who sat at table like the Ghost in "Hamlet," looking blue and sulphureous, and relating jests with all the ease and smartness that an elephant would perform the manœuvres of a fandango.

Equal if not superior to the cleverest of these was Dr. Wolcot, whose judgment in husbanding his points where the subject was luxuriant, I admired quite as much as his genius in inventing where the groundwork was threadbare.

It was during this season Mr. James Aiken of Drury Lane called out my friend John Kemble, for some supposed insult extended by the latter in his official capacity. John displayed in this affair his uniform coolness. The challenge was given at rehearsal; at night, the two played together; and on the morning, at an

early hour, they met with pistols. On taking their ground, Kemble said to Aiken, as he was the aggrieved party, he should fire first; but the latter was disinclined; and the seconds proposed that they should discharge their pistols together. This arrangement Kemble refused, saying, "He had come out for Mr. Aiken's satisfaction." Aiken became unnerved at conduct so honourable, and raising his pistol three times to take aim, trembled, and dropped it. Kemble at length lost his patience, and exclaimed, "For God's sake! Mr. Aiken, do you intend to fire to-day?" Aiken then fired, and missed him. Kemble discharged his pistol in the air, and asked him if he was satisfied? "Perfectly."—"Then I hope there is an end and forgiveness to the matter?" said he, extending his hand. Aiken grasped it in silent conviction of his worthiness, and they returned to town better friends than they had ever been before.

At parting, they promised to keep the affair a secret; but somehow it found its way to the Theatre, and during the rehearsal was buzzed about by the ladies particularly. A

new play was on the stage, and Kemble was immersed in the consideration of its "business;" a delay at length occurring, one of the ladies, not less noted for her nonchalance than her presumed influence with the manager, tripped up to him and said, "I hear, Mr. Kemble, you did not discharge your pistol at Mr. Aiken?"—"No, Madam," he replied; "I have brought it here in my pocket, to level at the first person that interrupts me."

Among my acquaintance at this period, I had the pleasure of numbering Mr. Bradelle, a gentleman of some repute in the fashionable and sporting circles of the day, at whose house I encountered the gentleman-boxer Humphreys, a man, not only in manners but ideas, far above the generality of "Modern Gladiators." Mr. Bradelle told me an anecdote of this person with great animation.

In the village near his country-house lived a blacksmith, who was not less distinguished for his bodily strength, than his proficiency in the art of cracking crowns, or, as it is classically termed in the present phraseology, "Pugilism."

This blacksmith was a sore annoyance to all the young men and women of the parish, as he made it a point to tumble one sex and thump the other, whenever an opportunity offered. To Mr. Bradelle's family he had been particularly unpleasant, and that gentleman was for some time considering how he could give a check to his insolence. Its secret was this : the blacksmith had never yet been beaten ; the most probable specific was, therefore, the novelty of a sound thrashing. When Mr. B. next went to town, he mentioned the matter to Humphreys, and prevailed on him to visit his residence, with the view of trying the experiment. The blacksmith's assistance was immediately required for some trifling repairs ; and on passing through the kitchen, he conducted himself as rudely as usual towards the maids. Humphreys sat in one corner of the room, dressed like a servant, and called out to him in a broad Devonshire dialect to "let un alaune." John Forge turned round on him in surprise, and inquired who he was. The maids (who had been instructed) said he was "Cousin Jemmy from Taunton,

just come into service." Mr. Bradelle, during this, had posted himself in a convenient situation to witness the scene. The blacksmith surveying Cousin Jemmy's slim figure with a smile of contempt, asked him whether he would prefer being placed on the mantelpiece, or thrown out of the window. Humphreys played his part admirably as a raw country lad; and by his sneering reply irritated the smith to that degree, that the latter struck him, though not violently. In an instant Humphreys threw out, and by a well-directed blow laid his gigantic antagonist on the floor. The latter soon regained his legs, and kicking chairs and tables aside, prepared to attack and hammer "Cousin Jemmy," in the manner of a horseshoe on his anvil. Humphreys, to carry on the deception, stood awkwardly and unconcerned, with his hands dangling beside him, till the blacksmith approached; when he again knocked him down, and so continued to do every time he got up, till Mr. Bradelle could contain his satisfaction no longer, but laughed aloud, and betrayed himself. John Forge, overwhelmed with shame, caught up his basket of

tools directly, and limped away to his work, being perfectly satisfied with Cousin Jemmy's acquaintance. This expedient had its desired effect, at least as far as it concerned Mr. Bradelle's family.

I know not in what particular place or on what occasion I was honoured with an introduction to Lord Barrymore, but we were thrown together in various convivial societies; and his Lordship was pleased to express so much satisfaction in my company, that I became a frequent guest at his table.

His Lordship was the most eminent compound of contrarities, the most singular mixture of genius and folly,—of personal endowment and moral obliquity, which it has been my lot in life to encounter. Alternating between the gentleman and the blackguard,—the refined wit, and the most vulgar bully, he was equally well known in St. Giles's and St. James's, and well merited the appellation he received in noble quarters, of the "Modern Duke of Buckingham," who was "every thing by turns, and nothing long."



His Lordship could fence, dance, drive or drink, box or bet, with any man in the kingdom. He could discourse slang as trippingly as French; relish porter after port; and compliment her Ladyship at a ball, with as much ease and brilliance, as he could bespatter "a blood" in a cider cellar. Had he lived some centuries previous, there is no doubt he would have been a prime favourite with Prince Hal, and the "maddest wag" of Sir John Falstaff's acquaintance.

To keep around him a choice collection of convivial and eccentric spirits, his Lordship instituted the "Blue-Bottle Club," or, as it was more commonly termed, "The Humbugs," which numbered Hanger, Morris, Arabin, Taylor, Carey, Hewardine, and many others, and was held at a tavern under the Piazzas.

The name of "Humbugs" was given it on account of the manner in which every new member was initiated. The system was to introduce two candidates at a time, and to set them quarrelling as soon as they were seated. It did not signify in how trivial a point the difference

originated: the members, expert in roguery, would, by taking opposite sides, aggravate the matter till it assumed the aspect of insult; and the disputants were urged from arguments to proceed to epithets, and from epithets to blows; when the noble supervisor of this farce interfered, took the strangers by the hand, and told them "they were both humbugged," and had become members.

My reader can infer the spirit of a Club possessing this for one of its regulations. The most whimsical effects I ever witnessed were produced by Charles Incledon's introduction, who had the honour of being proposed alone.

Barrymore was extremely pleased with Incledon's conversation as well as singing, and had long wanted to enrol him among the members. The "Son of Song" expected therefore an unusual degree of attention when he came. He was then extremely popular in the ballad of "Black-eyed Susan," for which the first call was unanimous; but he had not finished the first line, before a member exclaimed, "Oh! Charles, Charles! come, it's too bad to fool us in this

way!" Incledon stared, and asked what his friend meant. The person beside him joined in the inquiry: others however interposed, and begged Incledon to proceed:—

“ All in the Downs the fleet was moor'd ”—

“ Incledon, Incledon,” cried a dozen voices, “ recollect, you are singing to gentlemen, not the Covent Garden gallery.”

Incledon looked round in the utmost bewilderment: the manner of the members was so judicious, that he could not suspect the motive; they were all good comedians at table—not a face betrayed a double meaning; whilst a roar of voices round him whelmed those of the malcontents.—“ It's a d——d shame—Ungentlemanly interruption—Order, order!” &c. &c. At their request, Incledon was persuaded to proceed again.

“ All in the Downs the fleet was moor'd ”—

“ Stuff, stuff—(hiss)—Incledon, Incledon, you're drunk!”—“ Who says I'm drunk?” shouted Incledon. Twenty voices espoused his cause, and twenty swelled the chorus of reprehension;

whilst the cries of "Order, order!" tended only to increase the confusion. "I'll give any man twenty pounds," said Incledon, "who'll say I'm drunk, or give me the lie."—"You're drunk—you lie." In another instant Incledon had quitted his seat, stripped his coat, and was offering to fight any man in the room for the value of his Benefit. Lord Barrymore had now his cue to interfere,—and sufficient cause, for Incledon was wrought up to the fury of a foaming bull, and nothing under broken bones and bloody noses appeared likely to satisfy him.

The instant, however, that his Lordship said "he was humbugged," the Club, which before presented a state of universal irritation, burst into a roar of deafening laughter; the rule was then explained at large, and every member came up to shake hands with him.

"Why, Incledon," said Barrymore, "didn't you know we were called the Humbugs?"—"Humbugs," he replied, with a returning smile—"yes, (using his favourite substitute for sanguinary) — Humbugs."

This amicable result, however, did not always

ensue. Major Hanger one evening brought two friends to be “ humbugged,” who were both natives of the “ Sister Isle.” The members succeeded in setting them at variance, as usual; but the Hibernians, having been drinking pretty freely before they came, were in that critical condition when a slight thing will put a man in the best humour in the world,—or the worst. The convivial feeling being therefore changed to the pugnatory — when the members explained that they had been humbugged all this while; their indignation was excited in a tenfold degree towards the Club for the liberty it had taken. Vengeance was denounced on the whole assembly, and a riot *à la Donnybrook* commenced, which involved every thing animated and tangible in the room. Tables were upset, bottles flew about in every direction, and “ such method ” had the strangers in their madness, that in less than five minutes the apartment was completely cleared. On the servants running up, they found Lord Barrymore and one of the Hibernians stripped to their shirts, to dispute their respective prowess,—the floor covered with

a mass of plates, fruits, and glasses, and Dicky Suett in one corner of the room entrenched under a table, ejaculating his everlasting—  
Oh, la !

On the evenings, however, that I paid these laughing bacchanals a visit, nothing of this description occurred. I found every thing in the greatest harmony when I went—and so it continued ; and few such evenings as these have I numbered. There was Barrymore in his glory, the grand luminary of the night, with all his satellites and eccentric bodies shining about him.

The secretary to this institution, for some time, was Anthony Pasquin ; which was one of the strongest evidences of the eccentricity of its founder.

Anthony had given up his itinerant profession of portrait painting, and now edited "The Star," which under him, it was justly said, "began to twinkle." With talents for this vocation, which were thus attested, Anthony proved to be a disciple of the "Weathercock Willow-tree School," who could challenge com-

petition with all the statesmen of Europe. He wore his conscience in his pocket, and wore them both out together. Money was his only principle; and he fitted praise to the backs either of ministers or actors, as he would have done a coat, agreeably to price and order.

Passing over this unpleasant ground of notoriety, (which made its object walk continually between the two fires of horsewhip and pillory,) in his person he presented a greater. Daniel Dancer himself was a clean and decent individual, compared to Anthony Pasquin. He seemed to have a passion for dirt and negligence. With sufficient means to procure him luxuries (without being addicted to gambling or drinking), he always looked as if he had just been expelled from a poor-house or a prison. His clothes would have shamed Monmouth Street; his shirt had always a particular mystery about it; and his face appeared as if it had not been washed since he quitted his mother's knees.

I can give my reader an amusing proof on this point. I was at that time in possession of a very fine house-dog, which had formerly

belonged to Covent Garden; but for killing a man accidentally in the dark, was discharged. Pasquin came to my house one Saturday morning, to get "my bones;" but Mrs. Bernard and myself were out, to give the servants free dominion with their mops and buckets. The door being open, Pasquin walked in, and intended to enter the parlour; but the dog was lying on the mat before it, who, mistaking the former either for the dustman or a coalheaver, rose on his hind-legs, with a sense of the impropriety, and placing his paws to the stranger's shoulders, actually walked him back to the threshold, where he dropped to the ground, and looked him up in the face. The maid was descending the stairs at this instant, and perceived the whole affair. Now, this was not a more extraordinary proof of the good-breeding of the dog, than the unpleasantness of Pasquin's appearance;—here was a gentlemanly dog turning out a dirty one.

Pasquin's powers of conversation were unquestionably great; he was well-informed upon all subjects, and there was a tincture of wit and the evidence of reflection in every thing he said.



This might have been a sufficient inducement to his Lordship, in making him his secretary, and smuggling him in to his table ; but nothing but the last stage of the disease called “ eccentricity,” could have induced any man to single out such a person as his street-companion. Yet, in the full blaze of fashion, down its most legitimate channel, the pavement of Bond Street, did his Lordship delight to lounge, arm in arm, with his favourite, presenting the greatest possible contrast, in the splendour of his dress and person, the eye of the caricaturist could have wished to see.

His Lordship could say his original things at all times ; but he found it convenient to have a butt at table, like Pasquin, who, with a most Christian-like absence of pride, submitted not only to provoke his mirth, but to laugh at the most cutting personalities his patron could level at him.

One evening, Lord B. made a remark which transported Anthony so much, that he vociferated for writing materials, to note it down. The former called him to order, and asked

what he wanted. “Ink—ink—ink, my Lord!” he replied, striking his hand on the table.—“Do you?” said his Lordship: “wash your hands, then, and you’ll get a quart.”

On the first occasion I paid a visit to the “Humbugs,” about midnight we were reduced to a dozen persons; and then, when I expected, after passing a sociable evening, we should go soberly home, his Lordship gave a signal, and two members took my arm to the door, where I perceived a dozen chairs in waiting. Into one of these I was crammed willy-nilly, and then informed his Lordship was “going his rounds.” Opposition was now useless, and I submitted to become a “humbug” out of doors.

On this memorable night, or rather morning, we stopped at a dozen different cellars and houses, in the most secret and seductive recesses of St. Giles’s and Drury Lane, his Lordship acting as conductor to the fleet, and manifesting, by the ease and distinctness of his directions, his familiarity with the navigation of these regions obscure. Punch and mulled claret with eggs were our potations, and his

Lordship made himself at home with the various barmaids and hostesses, smoking his pipe meanwhile, and spouting "Bobadil" with good effect—

"The cabin is convenient, Master Matthew."

At about four in the morning, we had accomplished the circumference of this "lower world," in a tavern at the "Seven Dials," where we were obliged to disguise ourselves as much as possible, give false names, and pay a "footing" of sixpence each, to be admitted members of the "Two o'Clock Club;" a society which met at that early hour every morning, and was composed, as it appeared to me, of all the unemployed "artists of the night," in London. Certainly, I had no correct idea of a "Macheath's Gang," till on that occasion. Having emptied my pockets, however, I had nothing to fear, particularly as his Lordship was installed in the chair for the time he remained, with the greatest honours and acclamations. I did not learn that he was the founder of this meeting; but, by an inspection of the "footing-book," I perceived that he

was in the habit of supplying twice a-week two-thirds of its visitors.

When the signal was at length given for our departure, I, being an "uneducated" fellow, expected it was to turn our steps homeward; but my companions kindly dispelled the mists of my ignorance, by saying, that the orthodox conclusion to every London night's ramble was the "Finish," that being the established point where all the "bloods" of the metropolis, after their respective courses, coagulated. I was however as vulgar as uninformed, and feared that this "finish" to my night might prove one to my days. I accordingly made a sudden exit at the door, dispensing with the ceremony of a farewell; but his Lordship was bent on completing my experience;—a pursuit was instantly commenced, and "Stole away, stole away!" was the cry, my companions running, yoicking and whooping, like a pack of huntsmen after an unfortunate fox. The sounds, "stole away!" struck on the watchman's ears, who, taking me for a pickpocket, stopped me till my pursuers arrived; and then, as I was

about to "charge" the whole company, his Lordship's presence elicited from the "guardians of the night" a shout of welcome and applause. A few words explained my situation and his intentions, and the remaining contents of his purse secured from the aged traitors the most cordial obedience. I was abandoned to my fate; and the chairs coming up, in spite of entreaties or struggles, was thrust in again, and carried off to the "Finish."

Upon the scene that presented itself here I am not willing to dwell; for if it were agreeable, I should require the pen of a Fielding or a Smollett to trace its lineaments with any truth. The number of the depraved and dying that lined the seats of this receptacle, the contrasts of dress and countenance, the faded finery and sunken eye of one, the inebriated madness of another, and the still, settled aspect of despair of a third, were sights I could not then, under the combined powers of punch, claret, and brandy, behold with indifference: to say nothing of the maniac medley of sounds, the laughter, crying, and imprecations of numerous

beings in the most fearful state of excitement, which gave the whole perhaps the closest resemblance to our ideas of the infernal regions. Suffice it, that at about half-past six I effected my escape, leaving Lord Barrymore in all his glory, to go home for an hour's rest, and half an hour's lecture from Mrs. Bernard.

The opera of "Robin Hood" was not less successful at Covent Garden this season than on its original production. Mrs. Billington would have attracted the public in any entertainment. Incledon had superseded Johnson in the "Hermit;" Bowden, Charles Bannister, in "Robin;" and, owing to Edwin's frequent indispositions in public-houses and night cellars, I was put forward, as his substitute, in the "Tinker."

Bowden the singer was in some request at this time; but he did not maintain his standing. Charles Bannister, being told of his success, remarked, "Ay, ay! it's 'Robin Hood' this year; but next, it will be robbing Harris." He had a voice sufficiently pleasing for the generality of an audience; but he had little science and less taste, whilst his figure and acting were

equally mean ; and he had a face calculated for no character in the drama but “Bardolph.” My reader may infer the commanding feature of this face—it was a nose, like which, either in longitude or outline, the stage presented no parallel ; it stood out from his head like the hanging peak of Teneriffe : moreover, it was of the colour of the best vermilion. In the day-time, any physiologist would have called it a natural curiosity ; at night, it looked artificial—people took it for a mask.

When Bowden went to Dublin, his nose, strange to say, destroyed his voice ; the former absorbed the public attention, and at night led their eyes to suspend the use of their ears. In characters where he could slouch a hat over his face, (as in “Robin Hood,”) this nasal promontory was not so remarkable ; but when incapable of shading its red dimensions, the light of the house seemed to converge upon its tip, as did the eyes. The Smock Alley house was long and narrow, and whenever he came on, the audience were in the habit of holding conversations from the opposite stage-boxes, as to the

authenticity of his great feature. "Captain Flynn, Captain Flynn!—Mr. O'Grady, what is it?—is that a nose?"—"A what?"—"A nose! to be sure."—"No, by the powers! it isn't."—"It is."—"I'll bet you ten pounds it isn't; there never was such a nose!" Such an interruption, in the midst of a sentimental song, must have been vastly pleasant to the singer.

Bowden, like Sedgwick, had merely his voice to recommend him: he was a dull companion; but, unlike Sedgwick, he had a bad temper; he was envious and fretful, and with a second-rate reputation, used to give himself first-rate airs.

One evening, in "Robin Hood," I was *encored* in my song, and returned to the stage just as Bowden and Mrs. Billington were about to enter in their succeeding scene. The former, on going into the Green-room, began to remark, in a very contemptuous manner, the folly of comedians singing their songs twice in an opera, when the audience come to hear the singers themselves.

I was told of this a few days afterwards; but, in the mean time, very innocently retaliated.



Charles Bannister and myself were invited to a City dinner, and to a supper party the same evening, in the same quarter; and we determined to visit both, for the good cheer of the one, and the merriment of the other. On arriving at the latter, we found the room very full, and were smuggled into a corner by a party of "Beef-steakers." The host was pleased to call upon me for the first song; and, as a favourite ditty, I gave my "Panegyric on Noses," which elicited more than an usual degree of laughter, particularly its burthen—

"For there's nothing so grand as your nose that is long."

When it was about half over, a gentleman at the other end of the room rose up and went out; and at the conclusion, I was told this was Mr. Bowden, to whom the company had been applying my song throughout.

It was during this or the preceding season that Mrs. Abingdon, previous to quitting the stage, played a few nights at Covent Garden. This event gave rise to a gallant controversy at the Club.

One of the members, in admitting all her merits, (which was to admit that she possessed all the merit an actress could,) nevertheless found a great defect in her having false teeth; every thing else, he allowed, was entirely her own. Mrs. Abingdon had always been distinguished for this particular feature; yet now, being on the border of sixty, it was not so much to be complained of, if in this respect, as well as others, she agreeably deceived the public. However, she had some admirers in the Club, who espoused the cause of the genuine condition of her "ivories:" a wager was laid, and the decision was referred to me. I was unprepared with an opinion, (though, I confess, my ideas on this point had always tended to scepticism,) and promised to give my friends an answer the succeeding night.

For the first and second evening, though I repeatedly engaged her in conversations, my experiments failed. With her very brilliant eyes, it was impossible that I could keep mine always fixed on her mouth; yet, when I sat by

her, and others attracted her attention, my minutest observation left me in a state of conscientious indecision.

The third evening, I played 'Dupely' to her 'Lady Bab Sardoon,' in General Burgoyne's comedy of "The Maid of the Oaks." Having neglected the rehearsal, she requested me to run over the words with her in the Green-room. Leading her to a sofa for that purpose, I made use of some predetermined witticism, either on the play or the part, which induced Mrs. Abingdon to laugh heartily, and then—(as Sterne says)—and then (looking her full in the face, or rather the mouth) I was positively assured that her teeth were her own.

This perpetuated evidence of youth was in character with her person and her powers ; the slimness of her figure, the fulness of her voice, the freshness of her spirits, the sparkle of her eye, and the elasticity of her limbs, savoured alike of a juvenility that puzzled the mind, whilst it pleased it : of her it was justly said, that " she had been on the stage thirty years ; she

was one-and-twenty when she came, and one-and-twenty when she went !”

This season died that eccentric child of genius, John Edwin, in his forty-fifth year ; the most original actor of my remembrance in the old world, or the new,—a man that, if his principles had but equalled his talents, might have lived many years longer, and enjoyed the world's esteem, with its munificence ; but dying as he did, his fate created no sympathy, and his name is now only recognised on the front leaf of O'Keeffe's farces.

Pasquin soon after published his “ Life and Eccentricities,” for which I supplied him with the chief materials.

At the close of this season, my article expired ; and Mr. Harris offered to renew it on the terms I now received, with the choice of Edwin's characters, in addition to my own. To this very agreeable proposal, there was but one obstacle — but that was not contemptible,—my wife.

For the last two seasons, through the caprice

or necessity of my manager, she had been laid on the shelf; and, being a woman in the prime of her powers, she could not content herself with getting her salary for nothing. Such treatment was not to be borne without murmuring; and I, being her husband, was the lawful object to hear and alleviate her sorrows. Married women that are not actresses, possibly may not sympathize in Mrs. Bernard's situation; but all married men are capable of estimating the extent of my sufferings. In short, I was compelled to make it a condition of my re-engagement at Covent Garden, that Mrs. Bernard was permitted a due share of business; but as this was an arrangement Mr. Harris was precluded from making, I had no alternative, for the security of my domestic peace, but to quit the Theatre till circumstances permitted our return.

The struggle on this occasion was not to give up the favour of a public with whom I was firmly established; against this, I balanced the pleasures of country management: but it was to surrender my office at the Club, and sunder all the ties of my private connections. I certainly

did more than Antony on this occasion. All my world I gave up for love; but being a husband, I not only set a better example, but acted in a more singular manner.

To form a circuit in addition to Plymouth, I engaged the Dover Theatre, then to let for two seasons; and being advised to connect with it another depôt attainable by water, (in order to lighten the dead weight of country schemes, the expense of carriage,) I fixed on the island of Guernsey. From my gracious patron the Duke of Clarence I obtained a letter to General Brown, and through his instrumentality procured leave to provide the island with theatricals.

## CHAPTER VIII.

- 1791.—Plymouth.—Jefferson and the prawns.—Lostwithiel and the lace.—Mrs. Canning: her character, and anecdote of her great courage.—A ghost story.—Eccentricities of Becky Wells: her royal attachment.—Killing with kindness; and “Hav’n’t you heard of a jolly young waterman?”—Siege of Plymouth.—Dover.
- 1791-2.—Charles Mate.—Guernsey: my new theatre.—Mr. Hargrave, Jemmy Fotterel, and his patrons.—Teignmouth.—John Emery’s introduction to the Stage: symptoms of the future Comedian.—The patient Farmer.—Lord Howth, and the Landlady’s mistake.—Passage to Dover in the Pomona Frigate.—Mr. Lee Sug, and Captain Savage.—Mr. and Mrs. Fox.—Dover.
- 1792-3.—Début of Mr. Hunn, and his legs.—Anecdote of a spaniel.—Return to Covent Garden.—Fracas at Plymouth.—G. H. Barret’s last favour.

ON arriving at Plymouth, I found, to my great surprise, the Company collected, but no preparations for the opening of the Theatre. Wolf and Jefferson were away on one of their temporary schemes, and their precise point of

destination I could not ascertain, till Jefferson came over from the little town of Lostwithiel, bringing with him the pleasing intelligence, that the result of the speculation had placed all our scenery and wardrobe in jeopardy. I agreed to go back with him and play for his benefit, taking with me our singer, a very pleasant fellow of the name of West.

On crossing the ferry, we bought a quantity of prawns, which we agreed to reserve for a snack at an inn, where Jefferson said there was some of the finest ale in the county. West and myself, however, could not resist our propensities towards a dozen of the prawns, which lying at the top, happened to be the largest, in the manner of pottled strawberries, to cover a hundred small ones. Coming to a hill, West and I jumped out of the coach to walk up, leaving Jefferson to take care of the fish. We had just reached the summit, when we heard a great bawling behind us, and looking round, perceived the coach standing still at the foot of the ascent, and Jefferson leaning out of the window and waving his hand. Imagining some accident



had happened, down we both ran at our utmost speed, and inquired the matter. Jefferson held up the handkerchief of diminutive prawns to our view, and replied, "I wished to know if you wouldn't like a few of the large ones."

There was so much pleasantry in this reproof, that we could only look in each other's face, laugh, and toil up the hill again.

We got into Lostwithiel scarcely in time for the performance, which was "The Beaux Stratagem." As an evidence, I may be permitted to record, of my popularity in the West of England, the temple of Thespis in this place was for once so beset with visitors, that the gentlemen paid box prices to sit on the beams over the stage, and the ladies were accommodated with chairs and benches down its sides. As its dimensions, however, did not exceed those of a moderate-sized parlour, we were put to some inconvenience in our business,—to say nothing of the novel effect this transition from the wide space of Covent Garden produced on my mind. Nevertheless, the effect was pleasing: the proximity of so many beauteous

forms and faces led me to forget I was before the public, but rather contributing to the amusement of a private circle of friends.

In my first scene with Aimwell, I stood near a young lady, who, with all the innocence of her years, but curiosity of her sex, took up my hand, and inspecting its ruffle, looked at a fair friend, sitting opposite, and exclaimed, "Law! Jemima, it's lace, I declare!"

The lady that led our tragic business this summer at Plymouth was my old friend Mrs. Reddish, formerly Mrs. Canning, and now Mrs. Hunn. On the decease of her second husband (the tragedian of Drury Lane), she had married a respectable merchant of Plymouth, and retired from the stage; but the latter gentleman's misfortunes in business threw her again on the profession as her only resource.

As an actress, the efforts of Mrs. Hunn were more characterised by judgment than genius; but Nature had gifted her in several respects to sustain the matrons. As a friend and a companion, she possessed all the intelligence, with the accomplishment to be desired in a

woman, surrounding her talents with the halo of her becoming principles. It was at all times in her domestic, rather than her public character, that Mrs. Hunn secured the public admiration, and met with a patronage which talent might not have obtained. I had peculiar opportunities of seeing this, as well as of noting her great affection for her children. She had two little girls with her, (the Miss Hunns,) and a son, George Canning, then at Lincoln's-Inn, I believe, preparing for the bar. Upon the latter all her hopes rested for the ultimate recompense of her struggles and disappointments; hopes that were singularly realized. I had the pleasure of reading many of his letters to his mother, in which, describing the progress of his studies and his prospects, the enthusiasm of genius was lost in the glow of filial tenderness: his acquirements and his connections he valued only as the means of enabling him to provide for a mother, who, in his person, had made so many sacrifices to revive the character of his father. These letters were Mrs. Hunn's greatest treasures. She read

them going to bed, and carried them in her bosom as amulets against the poison of care or despondency.

But Mrs. Hunn was not more distinguished by this maternal affection, than a moral courage and a self-possession which are the usual concomitants of sterner and colder dispositions. Upon this point I can give my reader a remarkable proof.

Mrs. H., on reaching Plymouth, applied to me to aid her in procuring lodgings, which she required to be on a respectable but economic scale. The only ones I knew of belonged to Symmonds, our carpenter, which were near the Theatre, and possessed many conveniences; but some person having reported that the house contained a lodger already, a perturbed and perambulating spirit, other occupants it had latterly wanted. Symmonds, therefore, offered them to Mrs. Hunn for a nominal rent, if she would be the means of putting to silence this unfounded and ruinous rumour. The latter was happy to take them on such easy terms, and

said with a smile, that "it was not the first time she had been concerned in the 'Haunted \* House.'"

On the first evening of her entering these lodgings, after her children were in bed and the servant was dismissed, she resolved to sit up a few hours, to ascertain whether any sounds or noises were to be heard. What she anticipated in this attempt, I cannot say, but it would have been excusable in the wisest of either sex, if in the stillness of that time, and the loneliness of her situation, (a book and a pair of candles her only companions,) the powers of the imagination received a stimulus to overthrow those of the reason. The carpenter's shop, on the ground-floor, comprehended the width of the house, and was barred and bolted on the inside. As the workmen made their exit at night through a door which opened into the private passage leading to Mrs. Hunn's apartments, this door was usually left on the latch. About half an hour after Mrs. H. sat down to her

\* Addison's.

book (between eleven and twelve), she actually heard a low but quick noise in the room beneath, as if some one had taken up an extra-sized plane and chipped off the entire side of the carpenter's bench.

This was the sounding note to the diabolical chorus to follow: the noise ceased, but soon recommenced, and rose up with an accompaniment of all the tools in the shop;—a loud and vigorous concert of machinery, from the violoncello-movement of the saw, to the fife-squeaking rasp of the file, kept in tune by the time-beating thump of a heavy axe. It seemed as if all the deceased artificers of the district had assumed their places at the bench, and were executing a piece of carpentry for his infernal majesty. Mrs. Hunn no sooner received this auricular, than she determined to have ocular evidence of the fact. Few women in such a situation would have been troubled with their sex's common feeling (or failing)—curiosity; and fewer would have possessed the courage, equally uncommon, to have attempted its satisfaction. Laying down her book, and taking up

a candle, she opened the staircase-door and listened ; the sounds were still audible, and proceeding from the same quarter. Taking off her shoes to prevent the slightest alarm, she lightly and cautiously descended the stairs, and placed her hand upon the latch of the shop-door. She assured me that at this moment she heard the sounds as distinctly as in her own apartment, and felt convinced they were produced by human agency. In a second, the latch was lifted—the door thrust open, and her head and candle thrust in ;—when, lo ! all was still and stationary ; not a tool was out of its place, and not a carpenter to be seen, spiritual or material. To be assured of the truth, she even entered the shop, walked round the benches, and examined the fastenings of the doors and windows ; every thing appeared in order and security. She then returned to her room, doubting the reality of her recollections, when the sounds recommenced, and continued for about half an hour, till they ceased altogether ; she then retired to rest. The next morning, her impressions of the above were seemingly so monstrous, that

she resolved to say nothing, till the events of another night either set aside or confirmed them. Between eleven and twelve the same noises occurred, and she repeated her experiment, which resulted in the same manner. The next day the landlord and myself were fully acquainted with the matter, and invited to partake in her conviction. I was willing to take her word, but the carpenter was not; he sat up with her the ensuing evening; heard the sounds, and when Mrs. H. prevailed on him to descend the stairs with her, he was so frightened, that, instead of entering the shop, he ran out of the front-door. Mrs. H. was now given the apartments rent-free, and continued to reside in them throughout the summer; the noises occurred every night for about half an hour, till at length they grew so familiar, that she heard them with indifference. "Habit," she said to me, "is second nature, Mr. Bernard: if I didn't hear the carpenters at work every night, I should begin to fear they were coming up-stairs!"

These are the facts of this truly singular cir-



cumstance ; they occurred in the knowledge of a hundred persons besides myself ; my reader, upon this assurance, may account for them as he pleases ; all I wish or care to establish, is the courageous character of Mrs. Canning.

Among the number of pleasure-yachts that sailed into Plymouth this summer, (1790,) was one bearing that dramatic Cleopatra—Becky Wells ; who, in the flying finery of her dress and the buoyancy of her person, was no bad emblem of the boat itself. She was attended by a female friend tolerably old and ugly, as an object of contrast, and whom she never permitted to say more than monosyllables, in order to prove agreeable company.

In the course of these recollections it has been my necessity to speak very often of that peculiar species of moral being, termed an eccentric ; obviously, because theatrical life more abounds with it than any other. Eccentrics are plants that spring up all over the world ; but the Stage is a hot-house, where we see the greatest collection. Parker, Whitely,

Bowles, and some others, have been embalmed in these pages, to the knowledge, I should hope, of five generations to come; but if my reader has conscientiously decided on the respective claims of these worthies to preeminence, Mrs. Wells must now walk into his acquaintance, and bid them all hide their diminished heads.

I must admit, however, I have heard my own opinion disputed, that eccentricity is any peculiar constitution of the mind, but rather a disease; if so, as it is utterly impossible, either in a moral or physiological manner, to give any account of its nature and origin, I shall do no more than lay before my reader a few of its effects, as evidenced in the life of Mrs. Wells. In doing this I propose my reader's instruction as well as amusement; for I shall avail myself of an old "Beef-steak" opinion, which corrected Pope (not the actor) upon two points:—First, where he says, "An honest man's the noblest work of God!" deciding that it is rather "an honest woman!" (that being the more wonder-

ful), and next, that the "proper study of mankind is" not "man," but "woman!" she being the much more complicated machine of the two.

I have already mentioned that my acquaintance with Mrs. Wells commenced at Exeter, in 1776; where, being young and pretty, she was playing the second-rate "walking ladies," or rather "jumping girls," in the farces, who have merely to say, "they love Charles dearly;"—"they won't marry Mr. Higginbottom, and don't mind being locked up." Taking "The Author" for my benefit, I selected her to play Becky Cadwallader, who is a simpleton in the superlative sense. She was rather afraid of the undertaking, till I encouraged her by saying, "if she would merely put her thumb in her mouth, and look as usual, she would fulfil Foote's ideas to perfection." Her success in this character obtained her an opening at the Haymarket; where her performance of Becky established her fame, and gave her a cognomen for the rest of her days. Surrounded by a legion of gallant editors, who, in those days, were

all Majors of the Guards, or Captains of Artillery, she was led to think that their efforts to maintain her reputation would not tend to undermine it, and put herself under the protection of Topham, who, though a very worthy fellow, rather too strenuously advocated the "Liberty of the Press."

It was then her disease (if such it be admitted) began first to display itself.—Becky loved to oppose all the tastes and customs of the world; to wear furs in the summer, and muslins in winter; to improve her health by riding down to Oxford or Cambridge in Hackney coaches, and to relieve the ferment of town society, by incurring premeditated debts, and getting into sponging-houses, where she might enjoy her reflections undisturbed;—of all of which vagaries the gallant editor supplied the means with his purse, and defended the propriety with his pen. That amiable creature Miss Pope, endeavouring one day to reason with her, observed — "Think, Mrs. Wells, what the 'world' says of such conduct!"—Becky's head only ran upon Topham's "World;" and

she answered, "I beg your pardon, Ma'am, the "world" never abuses *me*!"

Of all Becky's peculiarities, perhaps the greatest was her imagining that every man she saw or spoke to, fell in love with her. As she visited the public places, the consequence was, that she set down all his Majesty's ministers, and half the nobility of the land, as her dying innamoratos. But she went farther, and wanted to make Topham call them all out (six at a time, in the manner of Bobadil,) to revenge the insulted dignity of her feelings. But this depopulation of all the squares at the West end, was a task he declined. Becky's malady reached its climax in her supposing that our late beloved and most virtuous monarch was among the number of her victims — she having been pointed out to him in the Park, shortly after his recovery from his first mental attack. When the Sovereign was advised to try sea-air and water at Weymouth, Becky followed him, hired a yacht at a guinea a-day (for which Topham paid), and attended him in all his excursions. This evidence of loyalty,

when first observed, was grateful to the bosom of the man who was indeed “a father to his people;” and he used to exclaim—“Mrs. Wells—Wells—Wells!—Good Cowslip—fond of the water, eh?”—But the daily demonstration of her attachment grew at length to be very singular, if not serious. Whenever his Majesty cast his eye over the blue element, there was the bark of Becky careering in pursuit of him; the infatuated woman reposing on the deck, in all the languor and sumptuousness of Cleopatra. The Royal attendants now began to suspect her motives; and the Sovereign became so annoyed at his eternal attendant, that, whenever he espied a sail, he inquired eagerly,—“It’s not Wells, is it?” or, on perceiving the dreaded boat, —“Charlotte, Charlotte, here’s Wells again!”

A few days before his Majesty visited Plymouth, Mrs. Wells arrived as above mentioned, and offered her services to the Theatre, which were cordially accepted. We naturally expected, that on one or two nights the King would honour his favourite amusement with attention

here as well as elsewhere: knowing that such nights would be overflows, we resolved to make the most of this harvest, and went to the expense and trouble of enclosing the entire pit as boxes. As soon as his Majesty arrived, I penned an appropriate address, to which I obtained the signatures of all the principals in Plymouth. This address was received by Lady Edgecombe, (one of my best patrons,) to be laid before the Queen, who was pleased to express a gracious approbation of my exertions, and to inquire the entertainments I proposed. I enumerated the pieces, and (little suspecting the rock I should split on) said, “that in addition to the strength of the company, Mrs. Wells, of Covent Garden, had volunteered her services!” This was reported to his Majesty, who, congratulating himself most likely on his escape from her attentions, heard the name with surprise and vexation: “Wells, Wells! Wells, again! —Cowslip’s mad! —on sea, on land, haunts me every where!”

Lady Edgecombe was then instructed to in-

form me that his Majesty would not visit the Plymouth Theatre during his stay ; though the cause I was left to surmise or glean elsewhere ; our expenses were therefore thrown away, and our expectations laughed at. Thus Mrs. Wells, by her eccentricity, this summer cost me at least a hundred pounds, and Topham two.

The last time I encountered this lady was about a year after my return from America, (1821,) in the street leading to Westminster Bridge: though old and faded, she was still buoyant and loquacious: a young, rough-looking male companion was with her, whom she instantly quitted to welcome me home. After about five minutes' conversation on past and present times, I begged not to keep her from her friend any longer. "Friend!" she replied, putting a construction on the word which I by no means intended — "he's no friend! — he's my husband!" It was now my turn to stare; and I inquired whether he was in the profession. She took him by the hand, and dancing up to me, through the stream of coal-



heavers, porters, and men of business that were passing, sang with great humour,—

“And hav’n’t you heard of the jolly young waterman,  
That at Westminster Bridge used to ply?” &c.

Vale—Becky.

Governor Campbell, who had always held out a very friendly hand to me, had by him a manuscript account of the Siege of Plymouth, during the memorable conflicts of the Cavaliers and Roundheads. He obliged me with a perusal of the papers; and the incidents they detailed were of so dramatic a character, that I obtained his permission to adapt them for our boards. Bennet the organist, who was a pupil of Dr. Jackson with Incedon and Davy, set the music to this drama, (deserving of a worthier vehicle,) and its attraction throughout the season amply recompensed the undertaking.

From Plymouth we proceeded to Dover, where Charles Mate, my stage-manager, had got the house in readiness to receive us. Mate was the Margate patentee, at that time a clever actor, and at all times one of the worthiest and

honestest men that have been mixed up in the turmoil of theatricals. Major Arabin had favoured me with a letter to Mr. Fector, a great patron of the Drama, by whom I was introduced to Dr. Mantel, Mr. Osborne, and other influential persons.

The season proved highly successful from the patronage thus obtained, and I chartered a brig to carry the company, wardrobe, and some scenery to Guernsey, where a theatre had been reared during the past summer, for which I supplied the entire funds, and had occasionally inspected in flying visits from Plymouth.

Among the novelties of the company was a Mr. Snow, under the name of Hargrave, who played my principal tragedy with considerable talents. He possessed a little independency, which secured him from the personal submissions of the Stage, and was one of those few instances where an educated and refined man had chosen it as his profession from a love of its genius. He was thus the most calculated to elevate and adorn it. On quitting me, I gave him a re-

commendation to Daly, in Dublin, from whence he went to Covent Garden, but soon after retired from the Stage, and entered the Church.

My leave to perform in Guernsey was but once in two years; and at the fall of the curtain, I let the house to a tobacconist, to be employed *ad interim* as a warehouse. We then returned to Plymouth, where I was joined by Johnny Quick, and my old Belfast acquaintance, Jemmy Fotterel.

Ten years had wrought no change in this well-known itinerant: he was as great a humorist as ever, and as bad an actor. Being bent on taking a benefit, (though totally unknown in Plymouth,) I made the charges as moderate as possible, and he gained about five shillings by the experiment. With this, however, he contrived to make himself comfortable, (which was making every one else very uncomfortable,) and went round to the principal houses to return thanks to his patrons who had not been to the play. This was about two o'clock in the morning. The first person he waited upon was the Governor, at whose door

in the citadel he played such a thundering tune with the knocker, that two or three servants looked out of the upper windows together. He desired them to inform their master, that a gentleman was waiting without, who had business to communicate of importance. The domestics, not being able to glean it themselves, retired with the conviction that, from his abruptness and mystery, he bore the news of an importation of Parisian Jacobins. The Governor soon after thrust his head from a window, and demanded of Fotterel who he was, and what he wanted.

“ Good morning to your night-cap !” sung Jemmy in reply.—“ Who are you ?” repeated the Governor.—“ There ’s a question !” replied he ; “ now, darling, if you had been to the play, you would have known who I was !—Jemmy Fotterel, to be sure.”—“ And what the devil do you want, Jemmy Fotterel ?”—“ Just to mention to your honour that my benefit took place at the Theatre last night, and there was but a paltry ten pounds in the house, which was just the expenses, and only five shillings over.”

—“ But what has that to do with me ? ” — “ Oh, be easy, and you ’ll find it ’s a great deal. Now, if your Excellency had taken your family to Jemmy Fotterel’s benefit, as you ought to have done, he would have had thirteen in the house, and that would have been just three in his pocket ; think of that ! ” — “ And is that all you wanted ? ” said the Governor, closing the window with vexation. “ All I wanted ! ” iterated Jemmy in a key which must have been audible in every cranny of the citadel ; “ by the powers ! it ’s a great deal more than I have got. — I tell you what, Mr. Alexander the Great ; if you don’t know a good actor when you ’ve got him, all I can say is, you shan’t patronize Jemmy Fotterel again, — and so good-night to you ! ”

He then visited the domiciles of a dozen principal families in Plymouth, and roused their superiors in a manner equally whimsical ; but was at length seized and brought up in the morning to the Town-hall, to answer the charges preferred against him. Mr. Winn, the Mayor, was both diverted and puzzled at the circumstance, being unable to determine what punish-

ment was appropriate for an offence so novel. Jemmy was at length dismissed, (through my interference,) but not without a suitable admonition.

The summer of 1792 was a short season at Plymouth, and the company divided—part of it to go into Cornwall under the management of Mrs. Bernard and Charles Mate, and the other to Teignmouth with myself. On this occasion I very unwittingly took my last embrace of Mrs. Bernard, whom I had the misfortune to lose a few weeks afterwards at Lostwithiel, in the forty-third year of her age.

Mr. and Mrs. Emery were with me at this period, and their son John, a lad of about seventeen, who played a fiddle in the orchestra, and occasionally went on for small parts. This was purely as a matter of convenience to me, and not of inclination on the part of the parents. One thought that he might make a fiddler; but both believed he would never be an actor. It is therefore with some pride I recollect that it was through my means John Emery owed his introduction to the Stage; I perceived the first

distinct marks of genius about him on the following occasion :—

Our visitors at Teignmouth were in the habit of walking on the sands during the fine summer evenings till about nine o'clock, and then dropping into the Theatre at half-price, by which economical arrangement they proved to be like a paste buckle, more brilliant than valuable. We frequently commenced the performance with half a dozen spectators, and by the fall of the curtain had the house crowded. One evening, "She Stoops to Conquer" was the fare; and at the conclusion of the music a solitary individual was before us,—a broad-breasted, rosy-faced farmer on the first bench in the pit. To the public demands no man could be more respectful than myself; but I certainly indulged in a doubt on this occasion, whether one man constituted the public, though we sometimes hear them spoken of in the singular number. I could not turn our one auditor out, from my assurance that others would eventually drop in; but it seemed to me a species of slavery, nevertheless, that a dozen persons should exert and

excite themselves for the space of two hours to please this solitary rosy-faced farmer. When I had come to a determination, I saw John Emery behind the scenes, dressed for Diggory, and instructed him to deliver a message to the aforesaid spectator. Peeping through the curtain, to observe the result, I perceived a manifest gleaming in John of the future comedian.

Entering from the stage-door in the dress, and apparently in the character of Diggory, he approached the farmer,—“Zurvent, Zur,”—the tone and manner of which appeared to be instantly recognized; — “Measter ha’ zent I, to knau, if thee shouldst loike to ha’ tha mooney back again, and go whoam, or will’t zit a bit till the gentlevolks do coum in vrom the town, and zo ha’ the play zurved up to’ee at once?”

The farmer rose from his seat, and after twirling his hat and scratching his ear, (those invariable stimulants to the intellectual faculties of a rustic,) he replied,—“Why, make my duty to your measter, young man, and zay as how I be coam zome distance to zee all your do-



ings,—but I ben't in no hurry ; and as I think it would be unzivil in me to ha' all the play to myzself, I'll zit down and wait a bit till the gentlevolks coam.”—John now made a scrape and his exit. The farmer “waited a bit,” till it was past nine, (with an occasional tune from the orchestra,) and some company then assembling, we commenced the comedy at its fourth act, and by eleven o'clock sent our visitors home, the farmer included,—in good spirits.

My principal patron at Teignmouth was the Earl of Howth, who had been a member of the Bath “Catch Club.” Of his convivial character I have no occasion to speak. He was one of the many noblemen of that period who could give their guests a double entertainment. Besides theatricals, his favourite amusement was driving, and, with the office, he was addicted to assume on the box the dress and manners of his coachman. To be precise to a hair, he wore even a wig, which was then especially confined to the Jehus, as a constituent of their livery.

Arriving in Bath one season with his family, he drove up to an hotel, and went, whip in

hand, to see some apartments on the parade, which a friend had previously engaged. Knocking at the door, the landlady made her appearance; and he inquired if her principal floors were not taken for Lord Howth. "Yes," she replied, "and I expected the honour of his Lordship's company yesterday!"—"Well, let me look at them."—"You look at them!—Umph, —clean your boots then, good man."

His Lordship complied with this request, though somewhat surprised at its tone and manner. Following her up into the drawing-room, which was very elegant, he expressed his satisfaction, but in terms of such coolness that the lady stared. He then flung himself on the sofa, boots and all, and desired her to fetch him a glass of water.—"Fetch you a glass of water, Mr. Whipcord!" said she, "get off of that sofa directly, you dirty fellow! and depend on't, his Lordship shall know of your impertinence the instant he arrives!"

His Lordship related this mistake with infinite humour.

Mate having failed to make the Cornwall scheme pay more than the salaries, I wrote to him to strike his tents, and put the company in motion for Plymouth, where I intended to re-unite our forces, and ship the whole for Dover. The day before we reached our destination, the Pomona frigate came in, on board of which was my schoolmate, Lieutenant Ross: he introduced me to Captain Savage, his commander, (a most gentlemanly and conversable person,) and the latter, on ascertaining my views, was kind enough to say, that as he was passing up the Channel, he would save me the expense of hiring a sloop to Dover, if the company would put up with a few inconveniences.

The company were delighted at the idea of going by this Government conveyance, and the next day we were all shipped, human beings and boxes, on board of the Pomona; the wardrobe, &c. proceeding by land.

This was an extremely pleasant sail part of the way, and truly theatrical the whole. There were some wags in the company, and one or two good singers (Williamson of Covent Garden,

for instance, the well-known "Bob of the mill"). Ross acted as Master of the Ceremonies; and the Captain was so engrossed with the oddities of his visitors, that he sometimes forgot the ship. On passing Chichester, however, the weather changed, and the vessel beginning to roll, the company began to heave, which, though it checked their mirth, afforded infinitely more merriment to the sailors;—our conveyance then, to make the most of the wind, began to go upon its side, and the larboard railings were lined with the actors yielding over to Neptune the good things they had received from the captain. One of my worthies, a Mr. Lee Sug, (since a well-known itinerant ventriloquist,) not being provided with standing-room, would not do that on the deck which he could not do on the stage—give way to nature, lest he should have committed a breach of ship discipline, but staggered up to the captain at the moment he was giving a command, grasped him by the arm, and said he should "feel particularly obliged if the latter would bring him a bason!"

On coming up to Dover, we found it impos-

sible to land, owing to the serious strife of those warring deities Æolus and Neptune, and the captain carried us on to Deal, where the beach and the current afforded greater facilities. Here a pilot-boat was hailed; and in a few hours we were all comfortably introduced to Mrs. Fox's parlour, at the "Hoop and Griffin."

This lady and her husband presented a singular contrast to each other, not less in mind than in person: she was a woman that could have conducted herself with credit in the highest circles, such was the propriety of her feelings and manners. He was a Cockney, but a greater realization of the vulgar and brutish than that word mostly implies. Their marriage had been occasioned not by affection, but obedience to a paternal agreement. Some noble company having driven off, at the moment Fox entered the door, Mrs. F. remonstrated with him on his not being in the way to pay his respects to their guests. 'This modern centaur, half man and half horse, looked at her an instant in stupid irritation, and then exclaimed, "Vy, here's a pretty rig! — vy, I wants to

know, marm : don't you make a nigger on me at vonst."

At Dover, this season, John Emery played my principal country boys (though his father constantly asserted, that going on the stage would be his ruin); a Mr. Mervin was my light comedian (who afterwards made his appearance in London); and I was joined by a Mr. Whitfield, from Exeter, who told me a very humorous story of my old friend Mr. Hunn.

I had known this gentleman for several years in Plymouth, where he was a silk-mercator, carrying on business to a great extent: he had received a good education, and could wield his pen with nearly as great facility as his measure. Being devotedly attached to theatricals, he assumed the chair of criticism, praised Shakespeare, advised me, and castigated the actors. Soon after his marriage with Mrs. Canning, he failed in business, and went on the stage; but, in doing so, discovered that there was a difference between the capability of appreciating the merits of a dramatic picture, and the power of producing one. It is a difficult thing for

critics at all times to exemplify their precepts. His *début* was at Exeter, where, there being some of the actors he had formerly satirized at Plymouth, they resolved on revenge, and circulated among their friends such reports of his talents as to prejudice the town against him. His opening character was "Marc Antony." Though a well-made, handsome man from his hip upward, he stood upon a pair of pedestals even more delicate than those of the never-to-be-forgotten Dicky Suett. These were the first things to attract the public eye, and the sarcasm of his enemies. His acting, unluckily, not being of an order to array the favour of the many against the pique of the few, so much displeasure was evinced, that he required the interference of his wife (a ruling favourite at Exeter) to enable him to proceed. His efforts, however, tended only to produce another tumult, and a second time his amiable partner came on to entreat their indulgence, when a countryman rose up in the pit, and in a broad dialect replied, "I tell 'ee what, marm; it doesn't zig-nify talking, if Mr. Mark Antony doan't go

whoam directly, I'll throw my hat at un, and break both his legs!"

Hunn, I believe, quitted soon after a profession for which he was so ill qualified, and entered the employ of some country merchant, whose fortune he had been the means of making.

One morning, I was agreeably surprised by a Folkstone fisherman bringing me a favourite spaniel, that I had entrusted to the company when they sailed from Dover to Guernsey, but who had gnawed his rope, jumped overboard, and swam to shore. Our servant girl (who was a native of Folkstone) had been very kind to this dog, and on his returning to our lodgings, he found her preparing her bundle to go home. Without her knowledge he followed her; and when she had proceeded about half-way across the cliffs, she was met by a gentleman in distress, who demanded her bundle and money. The girl screamed, and the villain (I must now call him) proceeded to violence, when this little spaniel, trotting behind, (who till then had never been reputed for sufficient courage to attack a rat,) flew at his leg, and bit it so severely,



that the footpad was obliged to release the girl to defend himself. She instantly bounded away, screaming "Murder!" loud enough to have been heard on board ship, till her lungs and legs were exhausted, and she sank down on the road. In a few minutes her little preserver ran up to her, covered with the blood of her assailant, whom he had most likely left rubbing his shins under a hedge. The dog followed her home, where her parents, in gratitude for this service, built a kennel for him, and fed him like an alderman. Hearing I was again in Dover, they returned him by the hands of their son. The spaniel seemed pleased to recognise me, remained at home, and took his dinner that day very comfortably; but by the evening he had trotted off to Folkstone. He was again brought back to me; but I, justly considering that he had got well settled for life, and moreover was not a proper dog for the profession, being imbued with no sound peregrinative principle, resolved not to make a vagabond of so domestic an animal, and consigned him to his recent possessors for the rest of his days.

Before the close of the season, I received an offer from Mr. Harris to resume my post at Covent Garden, upon a five years' article, and my former terms, which (being now under no restraints) I accepted. Taking a grateful farewell of Dover, remembering the many pleasant hours I had spent in it, my ensuing summer was as usual passed at Plymouth, where only one circumstance occurred that demands an allusion. Mr. Wolf, whose character corresponded very strongly with his name, having by me the previous summer been excluded from the licence, took the liberty of seizing the Theatre, on account of some scenery belonging to him, (which he had formerly acknowledged was not worth house-room,) and opened it with a company. As the verdict of a jury was necessary to eject him, I was compelled to erect a temporary edifice, for which my good friends Major Hawker, Dr. Gaskin, and Haydon, supplied me with the ground and assistance.

Plymouth could never support two theatres; and mine, though the smallest and least convenient, having the best company, and the best pa-

tronage, secured the best attendance. Wolf involved himself considerably by this rash experiment, being cast by the jury in the whole amount of my expenses, besides those of the Court.

One of his accomplices in this affair was a Mr. G. L. Barret, who, when called on for his defence, raised some laughter in the Court, by saying that "he had had the pleasure of being an old friend and companion of mine for many years."

About fifteen years after this, he rode up to my door in Boston (America) in a coach, and asked me if I would do him a last favour. I said, "Yes."—"Well, then," he added, "John, I am dying; when I am dead, put me under the turf, and I will never trouble you again."

He kept his word, and I mine.

## CHAPTER IX.

1793-4.—London.—Club.—Captain Clark, Macklin's Goose.—Merry, and my Lapsus.—How to speak a Prologue.—Eccentricities of Jemmy Wilde, with Cubit, with Mrs. Mattocks, with a City Club.—The two John Bernards.—A Lawyer's munificence.—The "Poor Sailor."—Munden's acting.—Plymouth.—John Emery and Dr. Gaskin.—Mr. Prigmore.—Comicalities of Billy Lewis.—Lord Edgewcombe's Ale.—The Dog-Coach, &c.—The Comedian's Recollections.—A "Comical Dog."—London.—"Beef-steak" Members abroad.—Curious circumstances of the deaths of Colonels Boswell and Elde.—The Elegy and Incledon's ear.—London Characters.—"Barrington" a judge of Theatricals.—Count Bibb.—The original of "Jeremy Diddler."—Gentleman Harry.—The Pickpocket of high life.—A singular Anecdote.—Scene in a flash house.—Incident.—Brighton.

IN the autumn of 1793 I returned to Covent Garden, and made my bow in "Lord Ogleby:" my reception led me to perceive that by my old friends and patrons I was not forgotten.

The first club-night I paid a visit to the

“Beef-steak,” which (to use Merry’s pun) had not been *cut* by the public, and was reinstalled in the secretaryship by the unanimous consent. The duties of this office had been performed in my absence by various persons. I perceived many new faces in the Club, and the absence of many old ones; but though no such enemy to change as some of my companions, I cannot say that in this case the change was for the better.

One of my most intimate acquaintance among the “Beef-steakers” was a Captain Clark of the Guards, a soldier and a bon-vivant of equally high standing. He was many years older than myself, but possessed a twin temper and taste, and, being a bachelor, agreed to furnish a house with me, near the Haymarket, that we might pass the winter under the same roof.

This was the gentleman that hissed Macklin in “Macbeth,” and was condemned to pay 700*l.* for “his whistle,” in the Court of King’s Bench. Macklin, my reader may remember, waved acceptance of the sum, upon a trifling condition, which induced Lord Mansfield to remark, “I have always seen you play with merit,

Mr. Macklin; but you never acted so admirably as you have done to-day."

Captain Clark had the candour to tell me the whole affair, as on one occasion Macklin had the vanity.

Among the early novelties of the season, a comedy was produced, to which Merry wrote a Prologue that I was to speak. In the piece itself I was not concerned, and by some strange lapsus, confounded the night of its production with another performance. I was therefore regaling at the Rainbow in King Street, with a party of friends, when George Peirce (the vocal amateur) happened to come in, who, staring at me, took out his watch and said, "Bernard, do they cut out the Prologue to-night? it's five minutes to seven."

I made but two steps from the stairs to the street, and about a dozen through the Piazzas to the stage-door. The overture was over, and my name was echoing behind the scenes, from a dozen persons, besides Lewis and the call-boy. Compunction at my neglect, and the bustle it had occasioned, confused me so much, that on reaching the first wing, the Prologue had eva-

porated, leaving an indistinct outline in my memory, with one or two points, and half a dozen rhymes. But the Stage was waiting, and it was no time to pause. Luckily, I had made up my mind that day to dine in breeches, and my head and throat were consequently in order. Snatching a hat from Holman, on I went, to the infinite amusement of Wilde the prompter, who had rung up the curtain directly, to increase my embarrassment. However, being now on my mettle, I dashed into a dozen extempore couplets, about *wars* and *tars*, *fears* and *tears*, *charms* and *alarms*, *beams* and *dreams*, *cause* and *applause*; and by now recollecting a line of the author, and then devising one of my own, with a very animated manner and indistinct voice, I was enabled to spin the Prologue out to a tolerable length, and made my bow (will it be believed?) to a *peal of applause*. My triumph over Wilde, Quick, Munden, and the rest, who were watching the result at the wings, was nothing in comparison with that of the next day. Merry ran up to me in the street, and seizing my hand violently, said, "I was the

only man on the stage who knew how to speak a prologue ;—at least,” he added, “ you are the only man, Bernard, that has done *justice* to *mine*.”

Among the wags of Covent Garden, Wilde the prompter was unquestionably the greatest. He could occasionally say good things ; but his talent for practical jokes distanced all competition. A few proofs upon this point may be amusing.

Cubit the singer was frequently teasing Wilde, by mislaying his snuff-box or the prompt-book ; and the latter concerted with Johnny Quick (a willing agent in such rogueries) a piece of revenge. He got the carpenter to fix a bucket on a swivel, over the stage-entrance of the Theatre, but so as to be concealed from notice ; which was then filled with water, and had a cord tied to its handle. The next morning, Cubit had to attend rehearsal earlier than usual to superintend a chorus, and found Quick and Wilde in the passage expecting his arrival ; the former with his coat off jumping vigorously, but ineffectually,



to grasp the suspended cord.—“Cubit,” said Wilde, “I have bet Johnny Quick a beef-steak and a bottle of porter, that he doesn’t bite the knot of that cord in five times.”—“In five times!” replied Cubit, in surprise—“why, I’ll bring one of my boys to do it the first time.” Quick desisted, saying he had lost his wager; and Wilde proposed to renew it with Cubit, who, scorning a reply, put himself under the cord immediately, to shame them with his superior agility. His companions took this desired hint to steal away a convenient distance, where there were about twenty other spectators secreted. Cubit jumped, clutched the cord, and succeeded in drawing over him the entire contents of the bucket.

His dismay and indignation must be imagined, as well as the sudden shout of the rascally carpenters.

On another occasion, a comedy by Lady Wallace being read in the Green-room, a number of her fashionable acquaintance attended to hear it. The room was prepared with appropriate attention, and the “company” came in

full dress. Lewis read the piece, and I acted as master of the ceremonies. At the end of the first act, when the refreshments (which were liberally supplied by Mr. Harris) were handed round, a jelly to Lady This, and cake and noy-eau to the Countess of That, a dirty little pot-boy pushed open the door, and presenting a pewter mug, exclaimed, "A pint of porter for Mrs. Mattocks!" Mrs. M. shrieked better than Belvidera in the mad-scene, and the cruel laughter of the company, I thought, would never have ceased. The young son of the spigot was speedily kicked out, but not before he had communicated that "Mr. *Wilde* ordered it."

Jemmy expiated this offence, however, by a persecution to which the only limit seemed to be that of Mrs. Mattocks' days.

Wilde was once invited to a club in the City; and the first evening he paid it a visit, by mistaking the time, he found himself the only person in the room. These convivialists commenced their proceedings always with a supper, agreeably to the very sound notion, that the rearing of a night's harmony is like that of a

building,—“ you must lay a foundation before you go upward ;” that is, “ attend first to the stomach, and then to the head.”

The fare at this place was Welsh-rabbits, which were served up plain, that the members might pepper them to their liking. Wilde could not restrain his passion, when so favourable an opportunity offered. Taking up the pepper-castor, he slipped off its top, emptied it into his hand, and refilled it with the contents of his snuff-box. To enhance his roguery, he secreted the other castors in a closet. The company soon after assembled, and sat down to the consumption of their viand. There being but one pepper-box on the table, that necessarily performed its circuit, (missing Wilde’s plate, who on that occasion “ never used pepper,”) and the snuff, being genuine “ blackguard,” so much resembled its supposed nature, as to prevents suspicion. By about the second mouthful, every gentleman felt an unaccountable tickling in his throat, (no doubt the ground glass this mixture is said to contain,) which called for as many glasses of porter; but every swallow of the rabbit

increasing the irritation, the words “d—d hot pepper” ran about, “some more beer,” &c. till presently every throat was on fire; liquid would not cool them, and their mouths began to run, as though in the extreme stage of a salivation. Wilde pretended to be affected like the rest, to avoid suspicion. The waiters were now summoned, charged with having poisoned the Club, and kicked down-stairs. The landlord then made his appearance, and found his guests “drinking, cursing, and spitting,” with fearful avidity. Showering him with oaths, they demanded to know what deleterious pungent he had infused in the pepper. He declared his innocence, inspected the castor, and discovered the substitution. It was now evident the evil one was among themselves. Mr. Wilde was a stranger; but he expressing himself alarmed ten minutes before, had run down to the bar, where paying for his rabbit and porter, the “alarm” continued, and he had gone home.

One morning, on descending to breakfast, I found a letter on my table, containing a cheque for two thousand pounds—it was from a noble

Duke in the country, to his solicitor, a Mr. J. Bernard, for the defrayal of expenses in repairing his town-house. The mistake was occasioned by my namesake living in the same street, and the number having been carelessly omitted in the superscription. Aware of the above, I immediately dressed myself, and called on the solicitor, whom I found at home: the production of the letter and the cheque (which he had been some days anxiously expecting) threw him into a fit of ecstasies, which I thought would have prevented my departure for the day. His last words were, "Depend on it, Mr. Bernard, I shall return this call."

When I related this circumstance to my friends, they were all of opinion that my conduct (however I might conceive myself remunerated by my conscience) would procure me important patronage from a new quarter. On my benefit day, as I was finishing dinner, Mr. Bernard returned my call; and, being shown into the room, bustled up to me with a smiling face and extended hand, exclaiming, "You see, Mr. Bernard, I have not forgotten you: it's your benefit to-night: I want *four box-*

*tickets* for myself and family;—never mind seats, Sir; we 'll take our chance." He then drew out his purse, and with great formality tendered me a *guinea*! (the box-tickets were then five shillings a-piece). I looked at the gold an instant, with a small selfish twinge of surprise, but gave him his tickets, and then with equal formality produced my purse, from which extracting a shilling, I offered it in return. Drawing himself up with laughable ostentation; "No, my good friend," said he; "I must insist on your keeping the shilling."—"Indeed, Sir," I replied, "I must insist on your accepting it."

Piqued at my manner, which was tolerably sarcastical, he looked in the faces of Bannister, Brandon, and others, who were sitting round the table, and perceived in each a significant smile. Seizing his hat, with the shilling, he exclaimed, "I see how it is, Sir; you are the very man I supposed you to be—Good day!" At this opinion, my companions replied for me with a shout, that seemed to blow the munificent lawyer from the top of the stairs to the street,—he vanished instantaneously.

During this season, I presented to Mr. Harris a petit comic opera, called "The Poor Sailor ; or, Little Bob and Little Ben;" which being approved of, Atwood composed the music, with much character and variety. Master Standen and Miss Poole were allotted Bob and Ben. Incledon in the "Poor Sailor," drew on the coat I had cut for him ; and my friend Joseph Munden played a sea-captain, in that genuine spirit which perpetuated to a late day the genius of Shuter:—in that rich and racy humour, which (if there is any thing characteristic in our Stage) may be said to constitute the national comedy of England, Shuter, Parsons, and Munden were a happy triumvirate, "whose like we may not hope to look upon again."

Mate, my acting manager, had carried the company to Cornwall, during the winter, in a sharing scheme ; and as the summer advanced, dropped down to Plymouth, where I joined him with Incledon and Munden.

Old Emery and wife had quitted the company ; but John remained, in his double capacity of fiddler and actor. Soon after we opened, an

incident occurred which induced me to take him from the orchestra altogether. A Mr. Prigmore (already noticed in these pages), who very candidly styled himself “a low comedian,” had to play an old man in the last act of “He would be a Soldier:” but at the time of performance was nowhere to be found, having secreted himself on board of an American brig, which was carrying out that provincial Garrick, John Hodgkinson. Search having been made for him in vain, I gave the part to John Emery to read over, and get through as well as he could. The latter retired to his dressing-room, made himself master of the words; then carefully arrayed, and when his scene arrived, went on, and played with such striking effect, that Dr. Gaskin came behind to inquire “who was the new actor in the last act?”—“Young Emery,” said I, “the musician.”—“You mean,” replied the Doctor, “young Emery, the comedian!”

Mr. Prigmore above mentioned was a poor man, and a very poor actor; and moreover was some ten or twelve pounds in my debt, for



an affair at Guernsey : he had no doubt been seduced to this act of desertion by the prospects which America then held out, of making the fame and fortune of every dramatic adventurer. But the captain of the brig, on discovering him amongst the bales and boxes, not dealing in human beings, and being a punctious man, came to me to explain the circumstance an hour before he sailed, and know whether his departure would be a loss to me. I had my ten pounds to sacrifice ; but fearing, if he stayed with me, the amount would be increased, I presented the captain with the debt in part payment of his passage ; and thus entitled myself to the gratitude of all country managers. I little thought, however, in thus shipping him abroad, how soon it would be my own lot to follow his example.

During this season, Billy Lewis and his wife came down to Plymouth, on a visit to me ; and it lay in my power to make their time pass agreeably. I wrote a note to the Commissioner of the dock-yard to obtain an *entré* for a party the next morning ; and when we had surveyed its

various purposes and preparations, we crossed the ferry to Edgecombe, ordered a dinner at the tavern, and then passed on to Maker Tower, from whence we had a view of an outward-bound fleet of merchantmen ; and the Cornish militia on the land, reviewing by their Colonel, Lord Edgecombe. As we were returning to the tavern, Jefferson proposed calling at the mansion to obtain Lewis a view of his Lordship's pictures, a favour that either my partner or myself could have commanded. On reaching the hall-door, however, his Lordship and attendants rode up, and in a most cordial manner begged we would sit down to dinner with him. This pleasure our previous arrangement prevented ; but in taking our leave, we were constrained to taste the family ale, for which Mount Edgecombe enjoyed some celebrity. It had been brewed on the birth-day of Lord Valtort, and was not broached till he came of age : it was more mild than the eulogised liquor of Boniface, but equally potent. Jefferson incautiously smacking his lips after emptying his glass, induced his Lordship to fill it again ; and

this being a precedent not to be overruled in regard to ourselves, we all found it a difficult matter to pursue our path to the tavern with that due preservation of the perpendicular which people usually maintain before dinner. The dinner, however, we found to be spoiled from the delay thus occasioned, and the flavour of the wine undistinguishable from the ale. Nevertheless, we returned to Plymouth in very good humour, and carrying Mrs. Lewis home in a "dilly," turned it round, to pass our evening in merriment, at a pre-appointed spot.

Half-way between Dock and Plymouth was a small public-house kept by a man who, many years previous, had gained some notoriety by a "Dog-coach." He had trained six large mastiffs to run in a chariot of an appropriate size, harnessed like horses; and as the best substitute for human beings, he had taught two apes to act as coachman and postilion; the former combining the duties of footman, and both clothed in correct costume: the one, in jockey-cap, buckskins, and boots; the other, in coat, waistcoat, breeches, cocked-hat, and wig.

With this establishment he travelled over the kingdom, publishing hand-bills to the children, whom he used to ride about agreeably to the way and the weather, at so much per mile.

On mentioning this circumstance to Lewis as we passed the inn in the morning, he said that this equipage was in Dublin at the time he was playing at the Smock Alley Theatre, where a pantomime being in preparation, the management engaged the "Dog-coach" to appear in it. In one of the scenes was an elopement to Greta Green of the Harlequin and Columbine; and this vehicle was employed as their means of flight. It accordingly circuited the stage once or twice, the Clown and Pantaloon pursuing, and "contributed by its run," said Lewis, "to that of the pantomime."

This tavern was the destination to which we proceeded in the evening. Lewis entered the house with Jefferson's three-cornered hat stuck on one side of his head, and called for some brandy and water. Billy was this evening extremely elate. His Lordship's ale had drawn forth his humour to an extent which, in the

perfection of his acting, I never saw surpassed. He had all the exhilaration of Vapid, with the quaintness of Petruchio. The host brought in the liquor, who was himself an eccentric of no contemptible quality. He attracted the principal custom to his tap-room, by the whimsical accounts he used to give of his peregrinations about the kingdom. To this "stock" subject Lewis immediately referred, and carrying him to Dublin, inquired if he did not remember the circumstance of the pantomime. A most whimsical dialogue now ensued, acquainting us that Lewis had amused himself by playing all manner of tricks with the dogs and monkeys, such as tying crackers to the tip of the postilion's tail, (permitted to poke out through a hole in his buckskins,) which generally unhorsed him by their startling explosion. Lewis was thoroughly unknown to the landlord, till he alluded to those circumstances; but the latter amused us quite as much by pretending, in the manner of Falstaff, that he recognised Lewis the moment he saw him. When we were therefore roaring at one of the above rogueries, the host clapped

his knuckles in his sides, rolled about his head, and, with a truly Henderson significance of smirk, exclaimed, "And do you think I didn't know ye, Billy Dawson?"\*

As a more convivial beverage, we now called for some punch, and round a three-legged table in a tenebrious back-parlour, sat down to drink, and recollect the most whimsical portions of our lives. These happened to be with Jefferson, Lewis, the dog-driver, and myself,—those in which we peripateticised,—the times in which we followed the example of our great founder, and strolled and spouted in plenty and poverty, under sunshine and cloud, content with the day, never fearing the morrow, realizing of life what philosophers have merely propounded,—that it was indeed a jest, and that he was the most enviable whose laugh could last longest.

\* The name that Lewis then went by. His mother's second husband was a Mr. Dawson, by whom she gave birth to George Dawson, a comedian, that was the twin of Lewis in appearance, and, without hesitation I will add, in talent. Of all the histrionic flowers that were "born to blush unseen," in my recollection, George Dawson and Vandermere were the most eminent instances.

In this manner the evening rolled away, and the "dilly" arrived at the time it was engaged, but about six hours before it was wanted. We then ordered another bowl, to seal up the above recollections ; and whilst it was preparing, Lewis rose from his chair, staggered into an adjoining room which was used for shaving and dressing, and laid himself at full length on the table, where some wigs had been powdered in the morning. When the punch was brought in, we could find him nowhere, and every room in the house was searched before the right one ; at length we discovered and raised him from the table, where having rolled about in his slumber, he looked more completely and comically powdered than Lawyer Endless when extricated from the sack.

It was some sort of coincidence with the above, that I should this summer have engaged for one evening from an Italian a company of dogs, who performed the ballet of "The Deserter of Naples" in a most surprising manner. The canine comedian that enacted "Skirmish" was so full of characteristic fun, that I don't

think my old friend Vandermere, the richest colourist of this part in the opera I ever witnessed, could have looked at the “Comical dog,” and sat with complacency.

The season concluded successfully, and making arrangements with (my) Mate to carry the company to some towns in Cornwall, I returned to my post at Covent Garden.

The “Beef-steak” this winter lost several of its valuable members. Lord Cavan, Colonel Boswell, and others, were abroad on service. We frequently received letters from them, detailing the private circumstances of the campaign, which on club-nights were read aloud to the company. On one occasion, our recorder opened a packet of two letters, the first of which was from Colonel Elde, conveying the melancholy intelligence that Colonel Boswell had been shot before the walls of Valenciennes the morning previous; and that the singular remark had dropped from his lips, before proceeding to the attack, that “he knew he should be the first to fall, as he was a head taller than any man in his regiment, and the enemy would take him for a mark!”



Colonel Elde concluded by observing, “ Who will communicate this to poor Mrs. Boswell?”—an amiable and beautiful woman, to whom the Colonel had been united but a few days when he quitted the country. The other letter, singularly enough, was from another member of the Club, who was also in the service, transmitting the intelligence that Colonel Elde himself was shot the day after Colonel Boswell, and that the letter to the Club was found in his pocket.

These events naturally darkened for that evening the gaiety of the meeting: we broke up early, and in testimony of our respect for the gallant and the generous, whose presence had so often illumined and gladdened our board, we passed a resolution that an Elegy should be written and composed, and sung on the ensuing club-night. Merry, or Bearcroft, I forget which, produced the poetry; Shield set the music, and Kelly, Dignum, and Sedgwick, were appointed to sing it. When the night came, the two latter were in readiness, but Kelly did not attend; it was therefore presumable that we were to lose our expected treat, (a mournful pleasure, it is

true, but one that sincerely concentrated the sympathies of the members,) when Incledon started up and offered to supply Kelly's place, if Dignum and Sedgwick would try over their parts. This they accordingly did, and Incledon, without foreknowledge or even a present sight of the music (being merely given a copy of the words), by ear only, struck into the inner part, and made it appear as correct and beautiful as either of the others. This was one of Incledon's every-day wonders.

Shortly after I came to town, I went to Peel's Coffee-House to look over a file of country papers, and finding every box in the room occupied but one, in which sat a very well-dressed man taking some refreshment, I accordingly entered it, calling for what I wanted. In a few minutes the stranger addressed me by name, (claiming no more acquaintance, however, than every private individual holds with a public character,) and entered into some remarks on the Theatres with equal spirit and judgment.

On looking round, I recognised my friend

George Pierce in the room, beckoning and nodding to me with an earnestness I could not account for, and in the interest of my companion's conversation did not attend to. Soon after, the stranger rang the bell, paid for his refreshment, and, politely wishing me good-morning, took his departure. I now observed I was the stare of the whole room, and Pierce cried out, "Bernard, what 's o'clock?" I pointed to the time-piece in the room. "No, no—by your watch!" I took it out and told him. A hum of surprise and merriment ran through the boxes, which I thought either very strange or very rude, and inquired of Pierce his motive in asking me. "Did you think, Pierce, I had not got a watch?" said I. "Yes," said he, "I did, for you have been talking this half-hour to Barrington the pickpocket."

"Odds tremors!" as Acres says: I felt, and finding that my purse was safe, grew charitable in an instant. My reply happened to amuse the company as much as my escape:—"I don't know whether the man's a pickpocket or not, but he's a devilish good judge of theatricals."

Receiving an invitation to pass a day at Richmond with a party of amateur aquatics, I extended my acquaintance by the knowledge of another London character, the well-known "Count Bibb," son of a Mr. Bibb, a cutler in Covent Garden, who, having run through his means, was now living on his wits, and proving himself to be about the keenest blade his father had manufactured.

He was the first *chevalier d'industrie* of his day, and by his success and reputation contributed not a little, I believe, to the propagation of the race. He was well-educated, and had some talents for conversation; but his principles were as plastic as his hat, and, like his costume, of that *sans souci* order, that implied a *sans six-sous* value. In his manners he was insinuating and genteel, even to refinement,—for, though requiring a slight dash of impudence to give spirit to his exertions, they were always restricted to the bounds of propriety. With the women universally, Bibb was a favourite: he was a clever small-talker, a good hand at whist, and a connoisseur in tabbies and parrots.

To the men he made himself useful in particular ways, and was one of the most obliging and convenient animals that ever ran upon two legs. He had his seven staunch dining acquaintance, whom he numbered, (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, &c.) and stuck to with instinctive fidelity. He used to supply his wardrobe by borrowing in a hurry coats and boots, owing to a sudden invitation to dine or go into the country—and his immediate necessities, by obtaining the "trifling loans" of shillings and half-crowns to pay for letters and parcels of game which he never received. The only game on this occasion was that he made of his friends. To bring him more immediately before my reader's eye, he was the original of Kenny's "Jeremy Diddler;" and Lewis, whom he had patronized for "orders" and half-crowns innumerable, knew how to colour the picture with tints the more striking because the more true.

I had an acquaintance at this time by the name of Higginbottom, a wine and spirit merchant, who supplied Newgate prison, and several of what were termed the "flash-houses."

On one occasion, when he was going to receive his money from these places, he invited William Farmer the coachmaker and myself to accompany him, as it would afford us an insight into low life, not every day to be obtained.

At Newgate, after a pretty general survey of the prison, we were conducted into the room of that elegant child of Mercury, "Gentleman Harry," who was then in "durance vile" for his attempt to pluck the "George" from the breast of a Royal Duke, in the pit of the Opera House.

We found him walking about, humming a fashionable tune, in an elegant *robe de chambre*, with his hair in papers, as if preparatory for a dress-party. This person enjoyed a peculiar celebrity ;—he was the pickpocket of high life. His sphere was the "West End ;" his resorts, the Opera, the Concerts, and Tattersal's ; and in his appearance and deportment he was well calculated to escape the suspicions of the beings he encountered. He aped the fashionable accent in his speech, fashionable modes in his living, and fashionable vices in his plea-

tures. Had Lord Chesterfield been a Chief Justice, "Gentleman Harry" would never have been punished.

When the keeper introduced us, he bowed with the utmost affability, told my friend that he sold the best wine in London (a hint that a bottle might be sent for, which was complied with), and assured me that he had often had the pleasure of sitting down with me at the "Beef-steak" and the "Anacreontic." He then dashed with much sprightliness into all the topics of the day, touching upon his own situation (which was a fearful one) in a tone of levity and contempt. After relating many of the adventures of his past life, he produced an instrument from a drawer, which he gave us to examine; it was a narrow tube of polished steel, about five inches long, from the end of which issued, by pressure, a kind of barb. This was an implement of his own invention for picking pockets, and the means, as he asserted, of obtaining him many hundreds: respecting it, we were favoured with the following anecdote.

The circumstance which led to its invention

was the fashion of tight buckskins, which clinging round the thigh like a second skin, rendered the insertion of a hand in its pocket extremely difficult, if not hazardous. Making a drawing of his design, he carried it to one of the first cutlers in the metropolis, and inquired if he had a workman skilful enough to construct the implement. He was told that it should be executed in a week, and the price would be five guineas. Leaving a deposit, he called again at the time appointed, was shown the tube, and perceived that it strictly accorded with the drawing. He then completed the payment very cheerfully, and was about quitting the shop, when the cutler stepped up to him, and in a most polite manner said, "If it was not a liberty, he should feel extremely obliged to be informed for what use so curious and expensive an article was intended."—"If you will step into your parlour, I will tell you with pleasure," said Harry. The cutler opened the door, rubbed his hands, and smirked him in with the utmost alacrity. "Plainly, then," said his customer, "this instru-



ment, which you have finished so highly, is intended for the purpose of picking pockets." The honest mechanic surveyed Harry from head to foot, and doubting his words from his appearance, attempted to laugh, and expressed his disbelief. The latter however repeating the assertion, the cutler begged to doubt the utility of the device.—"I—I should imagine, Sir," said he, "that—that instrument could not be applied to the purpose you mention, with any degree—of—of certainty."—"Yes," replied Harry, "with certainty! for, in proof, there is your purse, which I drew from your pocket as we entered the room."

The cutler's astonishment Harry left to our imaginations. When reflection returned, the former opened his restored purse, took out of it the five guineas, and begged to make his customer a present of the article, on condition that, whenever he wanted any thing more of that sort, he would be good enough to go to another shop.

We were not more pleased with the points of the above circumstance, than Harry's manner

of giving them. He certainly possessed all the external characteristics of a gentleman (with more than the usual talent that is displayed in telling a story), whatever his education, or the portion of sense which his unprincipled habits had so fatally perverted.

He was soon after condemned for the cause which now imprisoned him ; but, about a week before his execution, contrived to obtain a dose of poison and destroy himself.

From the prison we proceeded to one of those houses in the neighbourhood termed, by Captain Grose in his Dictionary, “Newgate Academies,” and went into a long room well lighted up, which was filled with chairs and tables, and had a bar at one end. If the occupants of these chairs and tables bore any striking resemblance to Macheath’s gang, it was because there happened to be a Peachum in this bar, who received their stolen contributions, paying them a trifling sum on the value, which goods he retained till rewards were offered, from persons that were willing to get back the property without asking questions. As Higginbottom’s busi-

ness led him up to the bar, we overheard the conversation that took place between the gang, (as they one by one dropped in with watches, rings, handkerchiefs, &c.) and Peachum certainly dealt with them too much like a pawnbroker. We could here remark all the peculiarities of their language and the varieties of their appearance, an employment that was certainly amusing if not edifying. After taking some refreshment, Higginbottom walked Farmer and myself round the room to survey its occupants more nearly, Peachum crying out in a clear sonorous voice, "All right !" in order to satisfy the company, as it appeared, that they were in no danger of our robbing them : some were engaged at cards, others at dice, and all in drinking. Here was the depredator to be espied in all his species ; though the distinction lay not so much, I imagine, in dress as in manner. This was a fine field for speculation, to have recognised the highwayman by his bullying abruptness — his stand-and-deliver decision ; the housebreaker, by his scientific phrases ; and the pickpocket,

from his shabby genteel pertness and nonchalance ;—a collection of nothing else, to use their own terms, but “ Gemmens and Genuses.”

This assembly and its purposes the Government permitted to exist, as it enabled the “ Runners” from the public offices to obtain a familiar knowledge of the thieves, and information as to the manner in which stolen property was disposed of. This practice, I believe, is no longer in being ; but as evidence of the good effects it occasionally produced, a circumstance occurred in the room before we quitted.

A man had just taken his seat at one of the tables, and begun to get social with his companions, when Townsend came in, who, having missed him for some time from his accustomed resorts, went up and slapped him familiarly on the shoulder—“ Ah, Billy, my buck, how are you ? give us a grip of your daddle !”—The compunctious rogue dropped the cards he was sorting in astonishment, and staring in the former’s face, exclaimed, “ What ! already, Master Townsend ! Why, you must be a conjuror ! why,

it ar'n't above an hour since it was done ! But never mind ; let me finish the rubber, and I'll go with you."

Townsend, with his usual presence of mind, assented, and coming up to me, of whom he had some knowledge, declared, with a smothered laugh, how the rogue had committed himself, as he had no charge against him whatever. The next day, when the robbery was advertised, the perpetrator was already in custody.

For the summer of 1795, several of my best friends advised me to apply for the Brighton Theatre, as, in consequence of a late Royal marriage, the town was expected to overflow ; and from the patronage I was sure of receiving in the highest quarter, the season could not fail in proving successful. Seizing the suggestion, I rode down to Brighton directly, called on Moody, and secured the house for £400, and a benefit for the Widow Fox. I now made the best arrangements I could to obtain an attractive company. Holman, Munden, and Inledon I engaged to succeed each other, and the Honourable Mrs. Twiseldon (the best provincial actress in England) to lead the business for

the season. Atwood superintended the musical, and Byrne the terpsichoric department, and Tommy Hull was my stage-manager. I forget the names of their coadjutors, a dozen clever persons, whose talents collectively constituted a strength fit for Bath, in its best days. It is sufficient to inform my reader, that the speculation was a failure. Owing to peculiar causes, the sea-seeking public that summer, instead of flowing to Brighton, ran away to Margate. No one stayed at the former but a few citizens and blacklegs; the first of whom came to save money, and the other to find it. Owing therefore to my expensive preparations, the curtain dropped to a loss of £570.

I had not been in London a fortnight, when my friend Mr. Morton, the coach-maker, to whom I had advanced a considerable sum, failed, which, with other circumstances not necessary to mention, in the short space of three months, swallowed up the entire amount of my professional savings; so that, with the exception of my furniture in town, and my share in the Plymouth Theatre, I was literally a poorer man now than when I entered London.

## CHAPTER X.

1795-6.—Guernsey.—Royal condescension and kindness.—A Compliment.—Anecdotes of Governor Small.—Royal interference.—Sir Sidney Smith's Boatswain.—Event at the death of Governor Small.—General Dalrymple, and my Guernsey Vauxhall.—A “Double Entendre” on the opening night.—Reasons of its failure.—Plymouth.—Captain Clark.—Charles Mate.—Anthony Pasquin.—The public mistake.—Lord Barrymore's Advice.—Rossignolle the Ventriloquist: his powers: Adventure in a Night Coach: His improvement of Joe Miller.—Anecdote of Quin and an Innkeeper.—Falmouth.—Mendoza and the Sailor.—The Jack and the Jew. — Colonel George.—Offer from America.—Farewell to the “Beef-steak.”—Manager and Friends.—Departure for the New World, 4th June, 1797.—A word to the Reader.

“A FRIEND in need,” says the old proverb, “is a friend indeed.” Having hitherto lived upon a level with my London acquaintance, I was incapable of ascertaining till on the present occasion who were really my friends. It was per-

haps worth all the misery of my situation, to find that the kindly feelings they entertained were not of that species which is generated by the bottle,—to be dissipated by the daylight;—that wine-friendship, which, with all its exhilaration and warmth, is but one of the fumes of the liquid, destined to be slept off;—a kind of sky-rocket sympathy, however high and brilliant at night, altogether unavailable by day. Yet such but too often is the valueless tie that links the comedian to the hearts of the community.

My case was fully canvassed at a committee of the Club, and a resolution passed to advance me £500 for two years, from their own funds, (repayable by instalments,) as a means of quieting my London claimants, and giving me another chance in the lottery of management. The Guernsey Theatre was this winter available, where the success of my first season led me to anticipate that the feeble health of my purse might be invigorated, if I repeated the visit. Colonel Arabin, Captain Clark, and Mr. Bearcroft, three members of the committee, then



waited upon Mr. Harris, to obtain his consent to my quitting him for the term of the Guernsey season. There was no want of sympathy in this quarter: I was sent for immediately, and given, in addition to his consent, the free use of manuscripts and music from the stock.

My course being thus decided, I determined to start under the most favourable auspices, and accordingly wrote a letter to my gracious patron, the Prince, requesting the favour of an introduction to the present Governor of Guernsey, who was Général Small.

I found that H. R. H. was confined to his bed by severe indisposition, and was informed by his gentleman, it was impossible he could attend to any business whatever. Nevertheless I resolved to send up my letter, and wait the result. The Duke of Clarence was with his royal brother, and read my epistle. To the latter (whose notice I first attracted at Portsmouth) I was under obligations nearly equally important, and amongst others, that of obtaining leave to visit Guernsey in the first instance. In about half an hour, a letter was brought

down to me by the attendant, to look over and approve, before sealed. It was sufficient to answer every purpose I required, and more than adequate to the claims I had ever presented to the favour of its author.

I may be here permitted to mention, that on my return to England, after renewing my acquaintance with all the friends who had survived the period of my absence, I paid a visit to Bushy Park, to make my acknowledgments to a person who had not been the least instrumental in forwarding my fortunes on this side of the Atlantic. I was received with all the friendliness of early years; the circumstances of my career abroad were inquired into; and his Royal Highness turned his eye, with a degree of enthusiasm, to the times which were marked with a spirit of conviviality long since departed. Among other matters, when touching upon the causes that led me abroad, I related the above circumstance of the Prince condescending to write me a letter of introduction when on a sick-bed. The Duke corrected me, by saying, "No, no; I remember the circumstance per-

fectly ; the Prince suggested the letter, but I wrote it." Considering that six-and-twenty years had since elapsed, with the respective situations of myself and his Royal Highness, this tenacity of memory was a compliment which I could not but feel the full force of.

On arriving in Guernsey, my reception by Governor Small was all that my letter could command, or I desire. He treated me at first more like a friend than an acquaintance, and subsequently, more like a relative than a friend. He went in person to the court, to renew my licence to perform, and facilitated, in a dozen ways, my preparations for opening. He then became a constant visitor to the house ; and in return begged I would seek his as frequently.

With the public character<sup>of</sup> this gentleman I have necessarily nothing to do. It is the property of the history of his country ; and the page that it occupies is not the least conspicuous amongst those mighty records of human nobility. In a social light I may be permitted to speak of him, and to point out a few of those qualities which founded his claim to a reputa-

tion nearly as enviable,—qualities that, like the tints of a miniature, were perhaps the less known and esteemed by the public, because requiring a near inspection to observe them.

In his manners, his affability was only limited by the becoming sense of his station. His mind was naturally powerful, and he had stored it with the riches of an extensive experience. He had many original conceptions, but more practical inferences. All his sentiments ran upon an even ground of liberality, and he tinged them with the entertaining flavour of a delicate humour.

To fill a public office with efficiency, it is as requisite that a man possess the virtues which guarantee the non-abuse of his power, as the talents which insure the due discharge of his duty. Governor Small was such a man, equally envied and loved: his heart was an unfathomed depth of benevolence. It had been his fortune through life to do many great actions; but I believe his real ambition was to do good ones. This was his noblest characteristic; for in this

he reflected his Sovereign. A few proofs upon this point perhaps will interest my reader.

Guernsey was at this time a point of refuge for various French families of distinction, some of whom had come over with small remnants of their property, but many comparatively resourceless. The Governor being informed by a friend, that one of these families were suffering the greatest privations, yet, from their pride of birth, were unwilling to make their case known, he came to me one morning, and inquired whether I would be willing to give an evening's receipts to their relief, after deducting the ordinary charges. I had no hesitation in consenting, and put his name for the next night at the top of the bills. By means of his exertions, the house was crowded, and the surplus of the proceeds, amounting to a considerable sum, the Governor conveyed to the distressed family, without giving them the slightest knowledge how the assistance had been raised, or from whom it came.

On another occasion, he sent for me to look at a pair of pistols, which for quality and work-

manship surpassed any thing of the kind I had ever witnessed. He told me that they were the property of a distressed individual on the island, who was forced to have them raffled for as a last resource ; that he had taken three shares in the raffle, and I must take one, and then our fortunes should be thrown for together. To this I made no other reply than by depositing my guinea, and wishing him success. I did not attend the raffle ; but he sent for me, in great glee, to let me know that the pistols were ours. “ And now, my dear Sir,” said he, “ what would you like to do with them ? ” — “ Why, Sir,” I replied, “ as they are of such a costly and beautiful description, I should like to present them to His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, as a trifling mark of my respect and gratitude ; but as you had three chances in the raffle to my one, I think you are entitled to a priority of choice. ” — “ Well, well,” said he, “ I’ll tell you how His Royal Highness will be better satisfied ; send the pistols back to the unfortunate gentleman that owned them, and they may serve him for a raffle another time. ”

My success at Guernsey was commensurate with my expectations, and when my leave of absence had nearly expired, (three months,) I wrote to London for actors to supply my place, and began to make arrangements to return. My intention however getting wind, the Governor called on me, and said I must not think of quitting the island till the season concluded, as I was marring my own harvest; and the authorities would not consider any substitutes responsible. Acquainting him with the obligation I was under, he offered to trouble my Royal patron with a letter, stating the prospect now before me of speedily re-establishing my circumstances, if permitted to remain; and craving the interference of His Royal Highness with my manager, to that effect. This was a proposal I could not refuse, and by the return of the packet he called on me with much satisfaction, to say that His Royal Highness had graciously honoured the appeal with attention, and that Mr. Harris was agreeable to my continuing in Guernsey till the close of the season.

One day, when I was dining with the Gover-

nor, Sir Sydney Smith made his appearance. His ship lying off Guernsey with an unfavourable wind, he had taken the opportunity of stretching his legs upon terra firma, and shaking his friend's hand. The Governor introduced me to this distinguished officer, with many flattering remarks on my character in public and private. Sir Sydney observed, that if the wind did not shift, he should be happy to attend a performance the next evening, and in that event, would bring his crew with him. I took my leave soon after, and, going to the printers, prepared an appropriate bill, which I headed with the line, "Under the Patronage of Sir Sydney Smith," running the risk of the wind changing. At night it was given out to the audience, and half the boxes were taken before they quitted them.

King Æolus, on this occasion, though noted as one of the most fickle potentates going, luckily stuck to his point with the pertinacity of a special pleader, and my boxes in consequence were favoured with an assemblage which reminded me of Plymouth. Sir Sydney



and his officers occupied a box, whilst the pit was entirely taken up by the crew and marines, over whom a tall boatswain presided, taking his stand by the orchestra, to "look arter" their manners and expressions. To gratify the nauticals, I fixed upon the musical farce of "The Purse," as it contained a sailor, (Will Steady,) who, in that day, pretty faithfully represented his species; namely, a lover of grog, glory, pretty girls, and tobacco. This hero I enacted, and on concluding the first verse of the famous drinking song, "Tol de riddle, dol de rido," I gave a toast to my messmates on the stage—"The King!" with three cheers, which the tall boatswain in the pit, conceiving to be equally addressed to himself and companions, sung out, "Ay, ay;" and, clapping his whistle to his lips, brought all the tars on their legs, with an ear-splitting hurrah. At the end of the second verse, my toast was "The Duke of Clarence and the Navy!" The boatswain piped, and the hurrahing again ensued with equal enthusiasm. Concluding the third verse, I hesitated a little, and asked my brother tars whom I should give

next (intending to propose Governor Small and the authorities of Guernsey), when the tall boatswain, leaning over the stage-rail, replied, "Sir Sydney Smith, to be sure!" I bowed, and the whistle going to work, the shouting now was ten times more uproarious than ever.

The season proceeded very prosperously, till an event occurred that gloomed the gaiety of the island for the rest of the winter—the death of my generous and much-esteemed friend, the Governor.

One evening, when the house was very full, I observed him come round and take a seat near the wings. When I was able to join him, I inquired if any thing unpleasant had occurred to occasion his quitting the boxes. He said that he had resigned his seat to some ladies, who were strangers; and felt slightly unwell. At his request, I procured a cordial for him; but, getting worse, he ordered his equipage, and drove home to the castle, from whence in three days he came forth to be conducted to his last abode.

On this occasion I closed the Theatre for a

week ; and many of the respectable inhabitants of the island went into mourning. 'The mourning, which had no outward evidence, was universal : domestic losses were seemingly absorbed in the public one. On the day of his interment an incident occurred, at once singular and interesting.

A Government vessel, on its way home from a foreign station, dropped anchor at Guernsey, the captain of which had been placed in the Navy and promoted to his present rank through the sole interest of Governor Small. The feelings of this officer may be slightly surmised, when, going on shore to meet his friend and second father, the object that his eye first fell upon was the coffin which contained him, attended by its multitude of mourners. He heard the news as he would have received a flash of lightning ; it scorched and withered him, suspending for the moment all the faculties of thought, and apparently of sensation. When reflection returned, the agony it brought with it overpowered him : he rushed into a shop-door which stood open, threw himself at full length on the

counter, and gave way to his humanity in a manner not less honourable to the dead than the living.

My boxkeeper, Roberts, who was an artist, took a faithful likeness of the General as he lay in state, which I framed and sent to the Royal personage who had been the means of my becoming known to him. Except his picture in Trumbull's "Battle of Bunker's Hill," I am not aware that there is any other resemblance extant. In that, however, he was characterised more expressly by his attitude than his face. He was drawn in the act of interposing between an armed soldier and a fallen enemy.

On re-opening the Theatre, I found the public spirit so completely deadened, that I put up the benefits, and brought the season to a close; commencing however another matrimonial campaign, by my union with Miss Fisher, a young lady in the company.

General Dalrymple succeeded to the governorship of Guernsey, and treated me with much politeness. At a party at his house, it was proposed to me to establish, for the summer, a

Vauxhall, in the vicinity of St. Peter's, the outlay of which to be partly defrayed by a subscription from the town. As the Governor and suite headed this list upon the spot, I had no grounds for declining to carry the object into effect. I accordingly purchased a cottage half a mile from the town, which was surrounded by about four acres of meadow-land; the former being small enough for a refreshment saloon, the latter large enough to contain all the company I could count upon. Sketching a plan of the erections and improvements, I then turned upon it a master-carpenter, painter, and a score of gardeners, and set off for London to purchase fireworks and engage singers.

The first person I called upon in town was Mr. Harris, who told me, with a very long face, that, on account of my delay at Guernsey, he had been obliged to engage a person to sustain some of my business; that my situation for the ensuing season might not therefore be agreeable; and if I pleased, I could continue my country speculations till the next year—an offer which, as it was likely to double my profits, I was glad

to accept. Disposing of my furniture, books, prints, &c. to my friend Captain Clark (by which I was enabled to make the Club a large payment), I made all the arrangements for my Guernsey Vauxhall, and returned to find it in a state of completion. On the opening night, a ludicrous incident occurred.

Among other things, I had purchased some rockets in London to wind up the nightly fireworks; but they were not mentioned in the bill, in order to give the visitors an agreeable surprise. About half an hour after their discharge, we heard drums beating in every direction, and the whole island seemed to be in a state of alarm. The Governor dispatched one of his aids to make inquiry, who on his return informed us, that a discharge of rockets having been fixed upon as a signal to the outposts in case of a descent by the enemy, my display (of which no notice had been given) was assumed as the appointed proof that the Revolutionists were on the island playing the devil with the maids and the magazines. The soldiery were accordingly hurrying in to St. Peter's,

to let England, the French, and General Dalrymple know they were ready to a man to do their duty.

Notwithstanding its numerous and novel attractions, Williamson and Mrs. Richards, two very pretty singers; supper-boxes and summer-houses; some thousands of variegated lamps; a loyal French band (who had run over to Guernsey, from their devotion to Louis); fireworks, patronage, and other fanciful matters, this speculation failed.

Three weeks had not elapsed before I was informed that all the old maids of the island were very industrious at their tea-parties, in commenting upon the indecorum of the promiscuous assemblage of the gardens, by which the wives and daughters of respectable tradesmen were brought within reach and speech of General Dalrymple's officers; moreover, that the old citizens declared they could drink their wine and coffee at their own doors for one-half they paid me, and see all my grand fireworks in the bargain.

Against this conjoint attack it was impossi-

ble to stand: greater speculators than I was have been ruined by less means; a venomous old maid and an economizing country squire would ruin any institution in the world.

Owing to the above experiment, the season was pretty far advanced before I could open at Plymouth, where, the favourable weather having gone by, the heavens were in the habit of getting into a lachrymose disposition every other night. There is no such effectual method to damp the spirits of an audience, as by damping their clothes. Captain Clark came from London to spend a few weeks with me; and Charles Mate quitted me to go home to Dover, (where his wife was in business,) and after his long voyage of life—like a ship which had sailed in all weathers and waters—to lay up his timbers by his family fireside, and go easily to pieces. Mate was another Macklin. He left me, as I conceived, a very old man, in whom the flame of life flickered feebly; yet thirty years after this, we met again in Dover (1825), and he was in possession of all his faculties as well as his feelings.



Another visitor at Plymouth this summer was Anthony Pasquin, who found his way to my lodgings instead of an inn. He told me that he was writing a history of Cornwall and Devon, and had come on a tour to collect materials. Receiving an invitation to dine at the camp, I took Pasquin over with me in my gig; and such was his appearance, that, happening to meet various acquaintances on the road, it was reported throughout Plymouth, "I was in custody of a London bailiff!" My good friends, Major Hawker, Dr. Gaskin, and Haydon, no sooner heard the news, than they came or sent to ascertain its truth and tender their assistance. Haydon actually encountered Pasquin in my parlour, and asked him if it was a fact that the stranger in my house was a London bailiff. When the mistake was discovered, (though the most natural and pardonable that ever was made,) Anthony could brook the laugh so little, that, to my infinite relief, he borrowed five pounds of me, and got into a coach or a wagon to pursue his journey.

I have given my reader a clue to the above

in a preceding chapter, where I alluded to Anthony's habits as being reprehensible in a double sense. Certainly no man, in my experience, presented so hardened an indifference to the established decencies of society. No man was such an infidel in taste. His principles were the only things he shifted—his consistency lay altogether in his costume, and the aspect of St. Paul's was not more enduring. Not even Peruvian Rolla was a greater enemy to change than Anthony Pasquin.

When a masquerade was to take place, for which his eccentric patron Lord Barrymore on one occasion gave him a ticket, he requested the latter to suggest an easy disguise. "Oh!" replied Lord B. "go in a clean shirt, Anthony, and nobody will know you."

The "legitimate" drama proved so little attractive this summer, that I was induced to forego my allegiance to Thespis, and listen to that financier of the infernal regions, Mammon, who presented himself to my notice in the person of Mons. Rossignolle the ventriloquist, from Covent Garden.

This person was the most wonderful of all the species which in my experience have flooded the Stage. His ability lay not in simply imitating the human voice, (the common province of ventriloquists, and the most attainable,) but those of all birds and beasts, and all noises whether natural or mechanical. It was difficult to say which was most to be admired in his organ—its astounding power, or its minute liquidity; for he could give you as correct an idea of the sawing of a huge piece of timber, as of the song of a linnet.

His entertainment was divided into three parts, with two appropriate scenes, which he carried with him: the first represented an aviary and menagerie, in which he personated the keeper, and as he approached every animal or bird, gave its distinct growl or whistle; the next was the interior of a workshop, in which he pretended to be making a box, and imitated the sounds of all the implements employed. These were rendered characteristic by his dress, and somewhat humorous by his broken-English exclamations. But the third

and perhaps most extraordinary scene was his performance on a violin without strings, of a variety of difficult music. Here the illusion exceeds conjecture; and, what to me was more delightful, all Plymouth came to partake in it.

Rossignolle was a fellow of very humorous ideas; he had met with adventures in all quarters of Europe, which it was his sole amusement to recount. Among the number, one that occurred to him on the road from Exeter to Plymouth was not the least whimsical.

He had taken his place in the night-coach, but by a mistake or connivance was expelled to the outside. The night was very dark, and soon after the coach set off it began to rain, which, in regard to Devonshire, is to say that the water came down like a cataract. Being neither provided with great-coat nor umbrella, he naturally envied the situation of those who sat under him. To desire their comfort, was but another throb with him to endeavour to obtain it; and in the depth of his roguery therefore, as well as distress, he resolved upon the following expedient. He was the only passenger outside,

and his location being the dicky, the coachman at the other extremity of the vehicle was incapable of "peeping through the blanket of the dark" upon his doings.

He pretended to hug and hush a child in his arms, whose fretful whine he commenced and increased till it cut the drums of the other passengers' ears like a razor. Two of these persons happened to be females, one of whom was a mother, and the other expected to be. They instantly exclaimed, "Dear me! there's a poor child on the roof, in this rain; let's take it in." The males, as gentlemen and Christians, were compelled to acquiesce; so down went the sash, and out went a lady's head and shoulders to address Rossignolle. "Here, my good woman, give me the child."—"No, no!" said the latter, mimicking the voice of a female; "mine littel dear Adolphine sal not go from her mamma;" and then he commenced another series of soprano notes (interspersed with an abundance of basso hush-a-byes) more intolerable than the former. "Good heavens!" said the humane female to her companion; "it's a barbarous

Frenchwoman ! She 'll kill the poor little thing." Then leaning out of the window again, " Give me the child, good woman, will you ? it will catch its death !—Here, coachman, stop, stop !"—" Stop, Ma'am !" said Jehu ; " bless your soul ! did you ever hear of sich a thing in sich a rain as this ? And if I did stop, the young un on the dicky would frighten the cattle."

Rossignolle now pretended to get into a passion with the child and scold it ; at which the women opened upon him ; the gentlemen swore ; and between the squalling, growling, screaming, and threatening, a delightful tumult ensued. The dialogue, as he described it, then ran in the following manner :—

*Child, squalling.*—" Ya, ya !"

*Rossignolle.*—" Hush, hush, child, child !"

*Women within.*—" Don't use it so, good woman."

*Child.*—" Ya, ya, ya !" (*a crescendo.*)

*Rossignolle.*—" You von littel devel ; you cry so much."

*Women.*—" There 's a brute, Mr. Wiggins !"

*Gentleman.*—"All owing to the French Revolution."

*Child.*—"Ya, ya, ya!"

*Coachman.*—"Steady, Betty, steady!"

*Rossignol.*—"You are one littel dam child!"

*Women.*—"Only hear the French monster!"

*Rossignol.*—"I will trow you into de mud!"

*Women.*—"What does she say?"

*Child.*—"Ya, ya, ya!"

*Rossignol.*—"Won't you be hush? I trow you away."

*Women.*—"Oh, you wretch!"

*Child.*—"Ya, ya, ya!"

*Rossignol.*—"Dere, den, cot dam! lie in the poodle!"

Here, suiting the action to the word, he made a noise as if he had actually deposited the infant in a ditch, the cries of which grew fainter as the coach drove on. The uproar that now ensued in the vehicle would have done credit to a St. Giles's watchhouse on St. Patrick's Day. The women yelled, and the men thumped the roof with their sticks, and swore out of the windows. "Stop, coachman, stop! murder, murder! she's

killed the child ; she 's thrown it in the ditch : will you stop, coachman?"—" In three minutes, Marm," he replied, " to change horses."—" But there 's a child lying on the road ?"—" I 'll send some one from the inn to pick it up, Marm ; I mustn't lose time between the stages."

The torrent of abuse now turned on the coachman ; and one of the passengers, who was a lawyer, swore that if the child died, he would prosecute the former for manslaughter, and the mother for murder.

On arriving at the inn, Rossignolle jumped down and ran into the kitchen to dry himself. The house was instantly thrown into confusion : the Frenchwoman was ordered to be seized ; lanterns were lighted, and a party set off to retrace the road, headed by the humane lawyer. No infant, however, was to be found ; and after groping about till they were all thoroughly drenched, they returned to the inn. The lawyer was then told that the Frenchwoman had made her escape, and that *another gentleman* had taken his place in the coach, which was now out of sight.



Rossignolle, I think, had read that national work, "The Jests of Joe Miller" but was able to improve on the original:—as for example:—Walking with him to the printer's in Plymouth, we passed a fish-shop, where a very fine haddock caught his eye, which he took up, inquired the price of, and then putting to his nose, contracted his visage with a significance not at all creditable to the fish or pleasing to the fishmonger. "What do you mean by that, Sir?" said the purveyor of piscatorials, with his brows lowered, and his arms stuck in his sides. "That haddock was only caught last night."—"Indeed!" said Rossignolle, laughing: "we will, see. Here, you littel boy, I will gif you one sixpence if you ax dat vish how long he come from him family at sea." The boy, taking the silver, put the question accordingly, amidst the laughter of the shop; when the haddock seemed to distend its gills and reply in a distinct voice, "Las Monday de week." The fishmonger and his customers started back, overturning the tubs and barrels in their terror, whilst Rossignolle, walking away with me, said

laughingly, "Dat 's what you Aingleesh call makin' de fun."

One of my treats at Plymouth was to eat John Dories, for which this place used to be very famous. Quin was so fond of this fish, that he passed one or two summers at Plymouth with no other view, having compounded for it a peculiar sauce. He used to put up at an inn kept by a Mr. Herbert, whose wife, through a severe vicissitude, was reduced in her old age to become one of my "dressers." Of the actor and the innkeeper there was a story current, which was very amusing. Quin complimenting the latter on the appearance of his house, soon after he alighted, Herbert replied, "Yes, Mr. Quin, it is handsome and convenient, and all very well except in one respect,—my drains run down to the quay, and the scents of the kitchen are so attractive to the rats, that they come up in numbers and consume all the contents of my larder and cupboards!"—"That 's a pity !" said Quin : at some leisure moment before I return to town, remind me of this circumstance, and perhaps I may be able to suggest a remedy."

Quin lived very expensively during this summer, giving large dinners, and indulging in excursions on land and water. When he called for his bill at the end of eight weeks, the longitudinal inventory of unpaid items amounted to 150*l*. He stared at it as he would have done at the Witches in Macbeth. "What, Herbert! 150*l*. for eight weeks, in one of the cheapest towns in England! Well, I must give you a cheque for the money." When he had done this, received the bill receipted, and stepped into his chaise, Herbert, recollecting his promise, ran up to him—"Oh, Mr. Quin, Mr. Quin, I hope you've not forgot the remedy you promised me, to drive away the rats!"—"There's your bill," he replied, "show 'em that, when they come; and if they trouble your house again, I'll be d——d!"

At the conclusion of this season I sold my share in the Plymouth property to Mr. Foote, and bade farewell to the many substantial friends who for nine years had supported my exertions with unflinching vigour. Major Hawker and

Dr. Gaskin supplied me with letters to Falmouth, which was my destination for the winter.

Sir Edward Pellew's squadron came into that port soon after my arrival, and he and his officers gave a favourable impulse to the affairs of the Theatre. Mendoza was at this time going about the West of England on a sparring excursion, but on coming to Falmouth had got out of his depth, owing to its dearth of a pugilistic propensity. Being in distress, he asked my permission to exhibit one night between the play and farce, leaving the amount of his remuneration to my generosity. I agreed ; but a difficulty then arose as to where he should procure an opponent. The only person available was our property-man, who knew nothing of the art of self-defence, but was willing to be "larned." The time and trouble however which would have been expended in this preparation was saved by the following circumstance:—There was a boatswain in Sir Edward's crew, who was noted for his muscular power and pugilistic prowess, as also for the more unpleasant characteristics

(growing out of the former) of a puffed-up, insolent behaviour. His officers wished greatly to have his manners reformed, and meeting Mendoza, proposed him as an antagonist, who consenting, they conveyed a challenge to the boatswain, and found the Jack as ready for the contest as the Jew. The result was, that the Theatre was packed with spectators like a box of corks; and the proud tar, drawing on the gloves, had the virtue of humility speedily thumped into him.

The success of this season was principally owing to the influence and exertions of Colonel George, of Penryn, a gentleman who achieved the highest triumph of the human character,—that of securing the esteem alike of the evil and the good: his heart was an inexhaustible spring of benevolence. He looked upon all men of talent as his brothers, and all men of misfortune as his children: whoever went into Cornwall in those days heard of Colonel George as the good genius of the country—heard of a man who practically realized the superiority of an Englishman over the natives of all other nations.

With the arrival of Spring, I concluded my career of management in England. I then paid a visit to Plymouth, Exeter, and Bath, playing a few nights in each, and reached London about the middle of Summer, to make a definitive arrangement with Mr. Harris, as to the remaining term of my article.

Whilst here, Thomas Hull called on me with the offer of an engagement from Wignel the Philadelphia manager, who had lately received an importation from Covent Garden (Fennel, Cooper, and Mrs. Merry—Miss Brunton). He offered me a thousand pounds for a twelvemonth, with the option of signing an article for five years (upon my Covent Garden terms) at its expiration. The means of securing such a sum in such a time were not to be resisted, and I carried the manager's letter to Mr. Harris, to procure my release for the remaining season I was bound to him. That worthy gentleman would at all times have been the last to have interposed his interests to the annihilation of mine, and, in the situation I was then placed, wished me every thing that I expected.

My next was a more painful duty,—the taking leave of the Club, and the formal resignation of its secretaryship, which had hitherto been kept open for me, from the supposition that I should return to Covent Garden. Upon the ties thus broken, and the home thus deserted, I shall not dwell. I was the slave of a despot, of whom despots are slaves—necessity ; but the reason that bade me stifle an unavailing throb of regret, did not attempt to throw a film over the eye of retrospection. I went abroad to improve the future, but not to forget the past.—This period (1797) exactly divided the forty-six years of my public career. I went on the stage in 1774 ; I quitted it in 1820. A pecuniary object carrying me over the ocean, my fame was for the moment absorbed in it ; but upon this point I think I have abundant reason to be satisfied. Had I continued in England, whatever might have been my ultimate ascension in public esteem, when the field was in a greater measure open to my exertions. I must have foregone the most memorable epoch of my life, the becoming one of the “founders of the American Stage !”

Having discharged all my obligations in London (the Club included), and made all the arrangements for my voyage, I took the coach for Plymouth, and from thence crossed to Guernsey, where, disposing of my Vauxhall property, and entrusting the Theatre to the care of Mr. Gilbert, I embarked for the shores of the New World, the 4th of June 1797.

And here, gentle reader, we part: if you are tired of my company, or so fond of your own ground, that you would not go a voyage of four thousand miles even upon paper, the concluding three-and-twenty years of my public existence must remain as much out of sight as America itself. I have but this to say,—that I consider the two volumes of Stage Anecdotes now submitted, as defining periods which form two acts in the drama of my life; and that if you are at all desirous the curtain should go up a *third* time, you need but to “make a noise,” and the wish will be complied with.

THE END.



LONDON:  
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,  
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.









